

Overview

The Adventure Continues focuses on writing and organizing skills. The unit is designed for four weeks, although it could easily be extended to allow students more time to "polish" their stories or shortened to two weeks if necessary. The unit is divided into three parts: part one allows the students to review story elements, part two involves students in group writing activities, and part three is publishing the stories.

Rationale

Many secondary students have difficulty developing a plot line that is interesting and follows a logical pattern. They rush their story without considering character motives, alternative responses, or their readers' interest. ***The Adventure Continues*** allows young authors to develop an interesting story and to think of various outcomes for character decisions.

Unit Objectives

TLW:

- create detailed characters
- use sensory descriptions in a story
- write short stories based on **Read-Your-Own-Adventure Stories**
- publish their short stories

Unit Assignment

Using the information about character, setting, plot, and story patterns, students) are to write a short story which will allow an elementary grade (4-6 grade) audience to choose their own adventure. The story will have a minimum of thirteen pages of text, will be colorfully illustrated, and will be typed and printed in the computer lab. Please leave a 1.5-2" left margin and place your completed story with illustrations in a folder with brads. Make sure you illustrate the cover and include your name and the title of your story.

If there is time in the computer lab, students could create their stories using PowerPoint or PhotoStory software.

Lesson Plans--Part One

Begin by reviewing the terms used in a short story.

- Character: the people, animals, or things the story is about
- Protagonist: usually the main character--he/she is faced with a problem
- Antagonist: usually the villain--creates or contributes to the protagonist's problem
- Characterization: ways the reader has of knowing the characters
- Dialogue: the way the characters communicate--verbally or nonverbally
- Setting: the where and when of the story--in these stories the where can change
- Plot: the events in the story
- Conflict: the problem in the story
- Resolution: how the protagonist solves the problem

Characters

Using the handout on character development, have students develop a protagonist and an antagonist. Have students share their characters and have listeners tell what other details they would like to know about the character.

Once students have created their characters, I have them get into pairs and read the character sketch to another student, who then draws what he/she thinks the character looks like. I then ask students to respond to the following: The character you have just drawn has witnessed a robbery at the Circle K. He/she knows that the robber needs the money desperately to pay for medical treatment for a sick child. The character is the only one who knows the robber's identity; however, the character also knows that if the money is not recovered the store owner will lose her business. What would the character do?

I ask the authors to evaluate the responses (both the picture and the scenario) and decide if any details need to be added about the character. I ask authors to respond to the following: Based on the listener's response, what details do you need to give about your character. (This is especially helpful if you warn listeners not to fill in missing details--for example if hair color is not given then they do not pick a color).

To review characterization, I divide students into two groups and supply both with butcher paper and crayons or white boards with colored dry erase markers. One person reads a description of a character the other draws and vice versa. Students compare their characters to the written description.

Next, I have students think about the way the character communicates with others, both verbally and nonverbally. I divide them into groups of three, and ask them to describe a football game, a rock concert, or a lecture about grammar to their partners without speaking, writing, or drawing pictures. Each person in the group gets a different activity to describe and are cautioned about revealing the activity before they begin.

Another activity I have tried is to have students **saunter, stomp, march, walk "cool", dance, skip, hop, or jog** across the room. I then ask members to demonstrate feelings (love, hate, boredom, etc.) by merely walking across the room.

An activity that all my students liked was to have them stutter, talk with a Texas twang, a Southern, Eastern, or other regional accent, speak like a surfer, a valley girl, a jock, a very educated person or an illiterate person. Although these are stereotypical, the students quickly understand that the way a person speaks helps to characterize him/her.

Depending on time constraints—teachers may want to do all or just one of the above activities.

Setting

I begin by having my students complete a setting handout. I then use the art transparencies in the teacher resource portfolio and ask them to describe the smells, textures, or emotions they associate with the place. After they share their ideas, I ask them to write the name of a place on an index card. I caution them to use only familiar places. I then divide them into groups of three and ask them to describe one word at a time the place on the index card without telling the name of the place or its location. One person describes, one tries to guess, and one writes down all the words needed to successfully describe the place.

ex: a ranch
horses, cows, manure, oats, dust, hot, sweat, rough, splintery, and dry.

Plot

In groups of three, students complete a plot handout. I have them write the story and then ask groups to trade and read each other's stories noting the steps that were well done. Then the groups return the stories and read the comments.

Because I want the each story segment to end in a cliff-hanger, I begin reading Joan Lowery Nixon's **The Stalker** two chapters at a time. The second chapter is from the antagonists view point and ends in a cliff-hanger. I also take time to read **Attention Span Stories or Read-your-own-adventure stories** to familiarize students with the story pattern.. I gather several create your own adventure books type books from the library for students to read.

I have also shown segments of **Batman, Superman, Flash Gordon**. These programs end with one of the characters in dire straits and the audience wondering how the character will be saved. These programs are easily taped from T.V. AMC airs old serials

on Saturday mornings, and **Batman** starring Adam West is rerun on several cable channels.

An activity that my students had a lot of fun with is called **And Then...** We sit in a circle, I start a story come to a cliff-hanger and say And Then... the person on my right continues the story. I usually allow each person to speak for about two minutes before coming to the cliff-hanger. When my classes are very large, I divide students into two groups, play And Then with one while others complete the Cliff-hanger handout, then switch groups.

Steps to Develop a Character

Use the following statements to help you develop your characters. Use these statements for each character in your story.

1. Write a sentence which introduces your character by name and occupation.
ex: Mark Roberts, a sports writer for the school newspaper, decided he needed a vacation.
2. Write several sentences describing your character's facial appearance. Make sure you give details about size and color.
ex: Mark's deep-set, dark, brown eyes sparkled in merriment. He ran his hand though his short, light-blond hair still wet from his early morning shower. When he smiled a small dimple appeared.
note: you may wish to include any distinguishing characteristics such as nose, mouth, ears, skin texture, scars, facial hair, or teeth.
3. Write one or more sentences describing your character's physical traits. These include the way the character sits, walks, stands; the character's weight, height, general build, the character's age (how old the character looks); the way the character speaks; and what someone would first notice about your character. **note:** You could also describe the character's choice of clothing.
ex: Mark walked confidently toward the newspaper office; his years of playing college football were evident by his physical bearing. Ignoring the crowded elevator, he lightly ran up the three flights of stairs to his office. Swinging open the door, he noticed the receptionist's admiring glance. "Good morning," he said in his soft Texas drawl.
4. Write several sentences telling about your character's goals or wishes. Include the character's greatest awards, successes, dreams, and desires.
ex: Mark sat down at his desk and stared at the framed picture of himself and Lydia. He thought about the last fight they had. He wanted to pursue his dream of becoming the city's leading sports writer. Someday, he hoped to cover the Olympics, he had told her. As he thought about Lydia, he glanced at the bookshelf. On it he had his football trophies from high school and college. That's what Lydia wanted--a football hero. The bookshelf also contained his scrapbook of articles he had written in college and for the paper which illustrated some of his best work.

5. Write several sentences that describes your character's special skills, knowledge, reputation, favorite sayings, best/worst deed, and what those closest to the character think about the character.
ex: Turning on his computer, Mark sighed, "Rats." It was the word he used when he really couldn't think of anything else to say or when he wanted to stop thinking of whatever was bothering him. Charlie, the copy editor, peeked into the office and smiled.
"Hi, Mark! How's the story coming?" he asked. Charlie didn't wait for an answer; he knew Mark would get the job done in his usual fantastic way.

6. Write several sentences that describe your character's likes, dislikes, and interests.
ex: At noon, Mark did one last save and turned off his computer. He stood up and stretched. "That feels good," he said to himself. Mark thought about going to the gym after work. That always made him feel better. He sat down and stared at the phone. He picked up a pencil and began to doodle. He thought about going out for lunch, but decided against the idea. Dialing a familiar number, he ordered his favorite lunch in perfect Chinese: fried rice, steamed vegetables, and two egg rolls. Hanging up, he opened the desk drawer and looked at his collection of chop sticks. He collected them like some people collect matchbooks.

Steps to Describing the Setting

Use the following steps to help describe the setting of your story.

1. Write one or more sentences introducing the setting by name.
2. Write one or more sentences describing the place after a storm.
3. Write one or more sentences describing the sounds of the place.
4. Write one or more sentences telling the place's reputation, state of repair, historical value, or general appearance.
5. Write one or more sentences describing the nature of the place. This includes: animals, plants, colors, landscape, etc.
6. Write one or more sentences describing the smells of the place.

Step in Plot Development

Use the following steps to write a story.

Introduction

1. In one or two paragraphs, introduce your main characters. Tell their names, occupations, and give at least two descriptions of their physical attributes, attitudes, likes, dislikes, or desires.

Next Paragraph

2. Briefly describe the time and place of the story. Describe the types of buildings, what they are made of, the sights, sounds, and odors of the place. Describe the climate. You may want to tell where the place is by name.

Next Paragraph

3. Write a few sentences describing the problem the main characters are facing.
4. Describe how the antagonist is a part of the problem.
5. Describe who or what caused the problem.
6. Describe when the problem started and how the main characters became involved.
7. Describe what the main characters can do about the problem.

Next Paragraph

8. Describe how the main characters and the antagonist confront each other.
9. Describe what motivates the main characters to make a decision in resolving the problem.
10. Describe the decision the main characters make.
11. Tell what happens to the antagonist.
12. Tell what changes occur in the main characters because of their decision.

Cliff-Hangers

Complete the following Cliff-Hangers.

It was a dark and stormy night. Sally was alone in the house. Suddenly the lights went out and the door flew open. She could hear someone approaching the house; soon she wouldn't be alone. Sally knew she had to make a choice; she decided to....

Cedric was a terrible knight. Everyone in the kingdom knew it. Everyone but Cedric that is. He thought of himself as the most fierce, most brave, and most dashing knight of all. One day, the king announced that whoever saved his fair daughter from the dragon would be her husband and rule the kingdom. All the knights in the land, and several from adjoining lands, set out on this great adventure. Cedric led the way. He didn't notice the other knights quietly laughing at him. On through the forest they rode. Suddenly they heard a terrible roar! Before Cedric could blink, there was an enormous dragon standing in the path before him. "Follow me lads!" yelled Cedric ready to lunge at the beast.

"What lads?" asked the dragon with an evil leer. "It looks like it's just you and me!" Cedric turned. No one was behind him. He looked at the dragon who was slowly coming toward him. Cedric decided to

"What a wonderful vacation!" Alex said to his companion. "Nothing to do but eat and sleep!" Alex had been looking forward to this dream vacation for a long time. Finally, he was away from the city with its noisy traffic, smelly fumes, and cold, rainy days. "I think I'll just lie back and enjoy the sun for the rest of the day!" Alex turned toward his companion. No one was there. He looked up and down the beach. There were no people anywhere! Blankets, coolers, umbrellas, and radios testified that there had been people on the beach and not too long ago, but they were gone now. Thoroughly alarmed, Alex stood up and shouted, "Where is everybody?" No one answered his call. He decided to

Paula was in a fine mess. Her father had gambled the mortgage money and lost as usual. Now the banker, Mr. Gregg, was threatening to foreclose on the farm. If they lost the farm, it would kill her father. Mr. Gregg had agreed to forget about the mortgage if Paula married him, but the very thought of being his wife make her sick. She thought for a long time, suddenly she sat up. "Well, there is only one thing to do! I'll"

Lesson Plans--Part Two

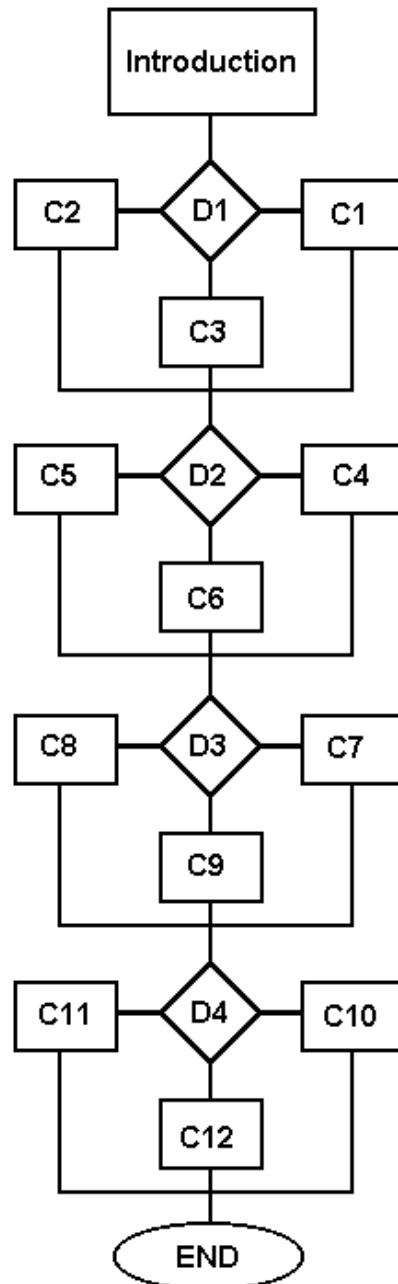
After I have given the students the suggested story flow chart and answered any questions, I have the students form groups of three. I give each group a different scenario and ask that each group member write one of the possible choices listed at the end. Then the members share their responses with each other. Next I have two groups combine and listen to stories.

Another group activity that my students like is writing roulette. I divide the class into groups--usually by rows. The first round introduces the characters and setting. With about a minute left in the round, I ask the students to make sure they have presented a cliff-hanger and three choices. The students switch papers, choose one of the possibilities and begin writing. Near the end of the round, I ask them to present a cliff-hanger and three choices. At the end of the exercise, the students get into their groups and read the stories they have created. They discuss how the story might have been different if alternate choices were made.

I also have students write their own cliff-hanger scenarios to share with their groups. The group decides on the scenario they want to develop, and they write a group story following the story flow chart.

Story Flow Chart

Use the following flow chart to design your story. The diamond shapes represent a decision the readers need to make, a rectangle indicates the cliff-hanger, and an oval indicates the end of the story.



Cliff-Hanger Scenarios

Give each group one of the scenarios below. Each group member should write one of the reader's choices.

One rainy afternoon, Tomika and her brother Michael were visiting their grandmother. The cable was out, there were no CD's that they liked, and they were beginning to become restless. Tomika thought about walking home, but the rain was pouring down. Michael tried to talk Grandmother into making something else for him to eat, but the electricity chose that moment to go out. "Well, I guess that's about it. There is nothing to do here!" complained Michael.

"Oh, I don't know about that," replied Grandmother. At that moment they heard a low moan coming from the basement. "That's the second time this week I heard that noise," whispered Grandmother. "I've been too afraid to go downstairs to find out what it is."

"Don't worry, Grandmother, we'll take a look," said Michael. "Tomika, get a flashlight and follow me!"

Tomika obediently picked up a flashlight and started after her brother. "Here you may need this!" Grandmother said softly. She handed Tomika a ...

baseball bat

a pair of work gloves

a whistle

It was fourth down and goal to go. "The coach will have to let us try for a touchdown," Rodney said to his teammates. "Matt, when I throw the ball, it will all be up to you!"

"Shouldn't we try to keep the ball on the ground?" questioned Derek.

"No, it's the last game of the season; we want to go out with a spectacular finish." answered Rodney. "I want everyone to remember this game for the rest of their lives!"

"Or maybe you just want to show off for the scout from State," muttered James.

"What was that!"

"Nothing, Rodney. We'll wait for the coach and do whatever he says."

Just then the coach sent in the final play; Rodney leaned over to the runner. "No way!" he shouted. "I can't believe he wants us to do that!" Rodney turned to the team and said,...

field goal

a pass

run

It was very late. Nancy looked at the clock and rubbed her eyes. She stared again. 3:10 A.M. She had been up all night trying to get her paper for English finished. "I'll never get this finished and typed before six. Why did I wait until the last minute to start my research paper? I could have had it finished by now!" she wailed.

A few minutes later, she was ready to start typing. Taking out the formatting instructions, Nancy turned on the computer. Carefully she set the margins, selected the correct font, and began to type. Suddenly the lights went out. "Oh no! not a power failure!" she cried.

Two hours later the lights came back on. Nancy was still slumped over the keyboard. Her tear-stained cheeks testified to her distress. "What else can happen?" she asked herself. "What should I do? If I don't go to school, I'll have to go to Saturday school again, and I'll lose my babysitting job. If I go, I won't have my paper finished, and I'll probably flunk English. If I wake Mom up and ask her to type my paper and bring it to me at school, I'll be grounded for two weeks and miss Sandra's party." Nancy decided to...

Stay home

Go to school

Wake Mom

Coming home from the football game, Jack and his girlfriend, Sarah, started to argue. "I don't care what you think anymore!" she screamed at him. "You're just a big baby!"

"If that's the way you feel about me, I'm surprised you let me drive you home!"

"You're right! Stop the car; I think I'd rather walk!"

Sarah got out of the car and started walking down the road. Jack waited a minute and then began to follow her. He leaned out the window and shouted for her to stop acting so stupidly and get back into the car. Sarah turned around. She began to scream. Behind Jack's car she saw a ...

a truck out of control

a UFO

a friend's car

Maria was cold and lonely. She wished she hadn't begged to be included in the underwater cave exploration field trip. She really wasn't an expert scuba diver like she told Professor Martin. Now she was lost. The water was so murky that she couldn't see the others. She must have taken a wrong turn. It would be simple to rise to the surface, if she could only find her way out of the cave! Maria sat on a ledge and waited. "At least there is a little air in here. I don't have to use my tank," she said to herself. She began to cry. After a while Maria noticed that the water, which had been around her ankles, was now near her knees. "Oh no!" she moaned. "The water is rising! I'll be trapped in the cave and drown!" As the water crept slowly upwards, Maria decided to...

call for help

try to find a way out

wait awhile longer

It had been a perfect day. Jana and her friends had skipped school to spend the day at the beach. The water was warm, the companions great, and the sun perfect for tanning. Jana hummed softly to herself as she turned the key into the lock. "The best part of the whole day is that Mom will never know I wasn't in school," she said. When she opened the door, Jana knew her perfect day was ruined. She saw...

her teacher

her mother talking to the school

her dead pet

"Why did we let the guys talk us into exploring the Thompsons' old house?" Becky asked her friend Kara. "Everyone knows it is suppose to be haunted!" The two girls carefully walked behind the boys.

"As long as we are all together nothing can happen," whispered Kara.

Suddenly they heard a noise that froze their blood. It was...

a loud scream

footsteps behind them

a police siren

Jeff and Bryan had spend the day working on Jeff's grandfather's farm. It had been hard work, and they were tired but proud of all they had accomplished. Walking across the meadow, they saw an angry bull coming toward them. They raced for a tree in front of them. Jeff safely scrambled up the trunk and reached for Bryan's hand. Just as Jeff hauled Bryan up the bull charged and gourde Bryan's leg. Jeff wedged Bryan into a fork of the tree and looked at his leg. It was a bad wound. Bryan had passed out from the pain. Jeff knew that he needed to get someone to help them, but he was afraid that if he left Bryan, he would fall out of the tree. Jeff was also afraid that if he left the safety of the tree the bull would charge and maybe injure him as well. Bryan groaned, and Jeff decided to...

run for help

stay put

climb higher and signal for help

Lesson Plans--Part Three

I remind students that their story needs to be logical, have an interesting story line, be typed and illustrated, and written for fifth grade students.

Now that students are familiar with story elements and cliff-hanger patterns, I give them time to create their stories. The first day, I ask that they write the introduction. Near the end of class, I ask them to get into writing groups and read their introduction twice. The first time, I ask that listeners concentrate on the flow of the story. Does it make them want to continue listening? I ask that they write down the interesting words or phrases they remember after the reader finishes the first reading. During the second reading, I ask listeners to concentrate on character development. Do they know enough about the characters to visualize them and to predict what they will do for each choice?

Students have the option of composing their stories on the computer or on paper. I also allow students to write in groups (however, each student is responsible for a story) or individually. I also allow students to trace pictures for the illustrations or to have a friend help with the art work. Some of my students have used computer graphic programs for their illustrations.

When the stories are written, I have the students revise and edit the stories using the story map. When they are finished, I have them turn in two copies of the story: one in the folder ready for the elementary grade students and one copy of the text of the story. They also turn in the story map with the names of the two co-editors. Once I have checked the story for illustrations and completeness, I send it to an elementary grade class. I ask the teacher to have her students pick stories to read and to write notes to the authors telling what they liked (or think should be improved) about the story. I grade the story text and give it back to the students. When the elementary graders notes arrive, we display the story text and the notes. This allows the authors to have a better understanding of their audience. We spend about one class period discussing how adjustments could be made to the stories for the audience.

Story Map

Use the following story map to revise your story. When you have finished ask two of your classmates to use the map and indicate your road blocks.

Does the story have a good beginning? Are the main characters and setting introduced?

Road Block--Go Back: Describe the characters. Give their names, occupations, and personality traits. Where is the story taking place?

Does the action of the story hold your attention? Is there a cliff-hanger at the end of each selection?

Rock Slide--Go Back: Is there a conflict or a problem for the main characters? Describe how your main characters feel or react to the problem.

Do the cliff-hangers have a possible/realistic solution?

Bridge Out--Go Back: Reread the description of the main characters, the antagonist, and the problem. What could the main characters do to solve the problem. Do they have the necessary skills, knowledge, or physical strength for the solution you have devised?

Are the main characters interesting and believable?

Road Closed--Go Back: Think about the main characters. What kind of people are they? Describe them in more detail at the beginning of your story. Describe their interests and skills before they must solve a problem.

Word Choice

Does the story use expressive verbs, adjectives, and adverbs?

Yield: Use the handouts or a thesaurus to find synonyms to help make your story more interesting.

Does the story use good sensory details? Can you see, touch, hear, taste, and smell details in the story?

Five Way Stop: Add sensory details. What do the main characters hear, touch (and how do the objects feel), etc.?

Does the story use metaphors and similes? Comparisons help the reader to visualize and understand the story.

Slippery Conditions Ahead: Compare confusing or unfamiliar parts of your story to more common information for the reader.

Do the sentences start in different ways? Are they different lengths? Are they different patterns?

Hair-pin Curve: Look at your sentences again. Do they start with the same part of speech? With the same word? Do they use a variety of patterns? Are there several types of sentences in your story?

Punctuation

Does your story have the correct punctuation?

Four Way Stop: Correct run-ons, fragments, end punctuation, quotation marks, commas, and other punctuation.

Does your story show correct use of dialogue?

Road Construction: Check your quotation marks. Do you have a set at the beginning and ending of each piece of dialogue? Have you begun a new paragraph every time you changed speakers?

Editing

Have you correctly spelled all of the words in your story?

School Zone: Use a dictionary to check words you are not sure about. Read the story from the last word to the first word. Make sure typing errors's are changed.

Is your story neatly typed? Is the left margin at least 1.5"? Are the pages numbered?

Road Paving: Use correction fluid if errors are minor or reprint a page if necessary.

Do you like the story?

Use Alternate Route: Have someone else read the story and make suggestions for improving the story.

Congratulations, you have reached your destination!

Co-editors _____

Co-editors_____

Expressive Verbs

weep	regulate	pry
implore	grasp	pretend
thrust	shirk	blend
hike	strangle	condone
snooze	grind	mangle
slumber	slash	launder
vacate	tear	leer
wander	entreat	forsake
lament	chuckle	forfeit
hoist	thrill	banish
heave	doze	glance
ponder	gossip	trudge
lash	crave	smuggle
twinkle	escort	pacify
gaze	confuse	dread
survey	mend	approach
sneak	frolic	chasten
descend	urge	chide
assign	cipher	trace
resign	emerge	guess
stagger	plunder	debate
whet	wager	tease
intrude	determine	discharge
pardon	rumble	counsel
nudge	mumble	deprive
perish	discard	flush

Ways to Say Said

accused	groaned	screamed
added	grumbled	shouted
admitted	hinted	shrieked
advised	hissed	thanked
argued	hollered	voiced
assured	implied	wailed
assumed	inferred	whined
believed	informed	
bellowed	interrupted	
barked	joked	
bragged	lied	
cited	laughed	
challenged	mentioned	
cautioned	moaned	
claimed	mumbled	
commented	muttered	
confided	offered	
cried	ordered	
cursed	pleaded	
denied	pouted	
described	promised	
directed	protested	
demanded	questioned	
exaggerated	raged	
explained	recalled	
expressed	replied	
greeted	responded	