

Lesson 2: "Sightseeing" in the Books of Published Authors

Supplies Needed:

- First Day Jitters by Julie Danneberg (or another book of your choice)
- A pair of binoculars
- Blank books for all students (one or two simple formats)
- Sharp pencils and erasers for each student

Procedure:

- Begin by posing the question "What is an author?" (For first graders this might be a good time to talk about the confusion between the term "author" and the name "Arthur". Many students still confuse the pronunciation and/or spelling of this word.)
- Show the students your binoculars and ask them if they know what they are for and how they are used. Demonstrate by looking out a window with a few students and let the rest of them know they will get the chance to try them out soon if they wish. Discuss how they help people to see things more up close when they are "sightseeing" or "seeing the sights" on a trip.
- Next, show the students the book First Day Jitters (or other choice) and ask them to go on a "sightseeing" adventure with you within the book. (All journeys have sightseeing, right?!) Ask them to tell you what they notice about the actual book itself - not the story or characters. You might even have them hold their hands up in front of their eyes as if they are holding a pair of binoculars as they look at the book. Some possible answers: title, author, illustrator, picture on the cover, pictures inside, dedication, about the author, page numbers, writing on the pages, different fonts – accept all of the things that they see about the particular book that you have.
- Let students know that everyone in the class will become authors this year during their journey to becoming writers and they will have the opportunity to write in paper books each day if they choose to do so (other paper options will be available as well), and that they need to

use published authors as their guides to know what their books might need.

- In front of the class choose an idea from your Idea book to write about today. (A narrative is always a good idea for a first modeling since many students also decide to share stories of things that have happened to them.)
- Show the class your blank book and model for the students how you might go about using your sightseeing adventure in the published author's book to start your own writing. You might think of a simple title to write on the front, put your name and draw a quick sketch. Reference what they have seen in the book as you do this. Then open the book and begin to write your story on the pages. (You can write your whole story or simply get started.)
- Point out that the first writing of a story can be called a "rough draft" or a "first draft" because authors always start out this way on their journey to becoming published. It is the beginning of the writing process.
- Pass out blank books to the students and send them to independent writing spots within the room. For some classrooms this is simply the students' desks, but other teachers give students opportunities to use clipboards and find comfortable spots in the room. It might be a bit too early in the year to begin that, so do what works best for you and your students as you think about what will help them to stay the most focused on writing.
- As students are writing during independent time, you may choose to begin conferencing, however we suggest that you keep this fairly informal at this beginning stage of writer's workshop (more of a simple "checking in" to see how students are doing). Because workshop may be new to them, you may want to circulate the classroom these first few days to make sure students are on task and focused. We have found that formal conferencing tends to be interrupted quite a bit until students are used to the routine of independent writing time.

- While touching base with students, talk to a few about discussing their writing during sharing time today (to give them time to think about what they might say). They will not necessarily need to read the whole book to the class. Keep in mind that you are not looking for the best writers or those who wrote an entire story today, but those that are putting into practice what you taught them during your mini-lesson – in this case adding a title, name and picture to the front cover or any other noticing that they came up with during the mini-lesson.
- Gather students and have those few share what they did to reflect the sightseeing that they did earlier.

Notes: _____

