

## Fantasy Writing Unit of Study

### How should I begin my unit of study?

As always we begin our writing unit of study with a day or two of noticings.

We pull today our favorite fantasy books in the classroom. We introduce the idea of a fantasy book by reading aloud an example.

One of our favorites is a book from The Magic Treehouse series. Students enjoy these and they contain many elements of a fantasy. As we read aloud, we bring up the idea of reality versus fantasy.

Within the download we have created you will find a Mentor Texts chart. Record the books you use as mentor texts for this unit on this page. Along with the title, write down the location of the book. This will make it easier to find the books you used next year!

### What are noticings?

To begin noticings, we partner up students and give them each a book or two that is a good example of a fantasy book. We hand students a few post it notes and give them a chance to search for features of a fantasy text.

Remember, this is before we have created an anchor chart so some answers may be true and some may not be. This is ok...both will give you more to discuss when you pull back together as a class.

As students complete their noticings, make sure you filter around to talk with the kids about what they are noticing. This activity may last 20 minutes or it may take an hour – it depends on your students. When you feel like most groups are finished, pull back together as a class.

We have included a noticings page you may use if you would like your students to record their observations.

## **Anchor Charts**

When you pull back together, create an anchor chart that includes the aspects of a fantasy story that you have found. We have created printable and colorful samples you might choose to use. We have also created a reality anchor chart if your students need a visual to help them compare.

There is a T-chart students can use to record the differences they find between fantasy and reality.

Within the resources, you will find graphic organizers designed for you to give to students along with a fantasy and a reality book.

Students look for the differences and fill out the graphic organizer in order to show their understanding.

**Fantasy and Reality Sort** For an easy literacy center, you will find a card sort for students to sort the events between fantasy and reality.

There is also a blank page so that students can create their own events as an extension. Simply print and laminate the blank page and students can use a vis-a-vis marker.

## **Introducing Fantasy Characters**

You can choose any favorite book with characters that are not real for this mini-lesson.

One of our favorites is *Click Clack Moo*. We like it because it is a familiar text with many examples of what characters can do that are not real.

After reading aloud the story, talk about what makes the characters fantasy characters. Responses should refer to the human-like actions of the animals.

## **Introducing Fantasy Settings**

Again, this lesson can be completed with any fantasy book with a good example of an imaginary world.

One of our favorites is [The Three Little Aliens and the Big Bad Robot](#) (you will find the link to purchase at the bottom of the page.)

After reading the book, discuss the fantasy setting. Have students share how they know the setting is imaginary.

## **Problem & Solution**

This is often the most difficult part for students to include in their fantasy writing.

Students tend to have a problem but forget to include a solution.

Or, the story created is a list of events without a problem to solve.

For this reason, this is a good topic to focus on for more than one day.

After a read aloud, we like to have students complete a story map or a simple graphic organizer like this one: Problem & Solution.

We like to follow the whole group lesson up with an independent practice the following day.

### **Starting a Story**

You will find pages with ten cards on each. One has labels for characters and the other for settings. These can be printed on card stock and laminated for future use. There is also an additional blank page.

Have students choose one of each card. You might place them in a basket and have students pick without looking. Or, you can allow children to choose the cards that interest them the most.

Children will then take their two cards and complete the Starting a Story page.

These pages can be completed in small groups or as a literacy center activity.

Have students save their pages in their writing folders. These can then be used as story starters later.

## **Planning Your Writing**

Model for students how to create a fantasy planner for their books.

Use one of our Fantasy Writing Planners and have children plan their own stories.

Remind students that it is ok to use a familiar character or setting from a favorite book. Their job is to create a new story using that character or setting.

**Create a Magical World** This graphic organizer can be used at any point in this unit to get your students thinking about their setting.

**Fantastic Words** This simple anchor chart of words might be used as a word wall or simply a tool to get your students thinking about possibilities.

Includes two graphic organizers for students who want to make a list of words they will use in their writing.

## **Working on Capitalization**

In order to help students become better writers, we like to include a grammar focus in each unit.

We have included an anchor chart and checklists for students to use when checking for correct capitalization.

Of course, it is always best to first talk about and practice this skill in a mini-lesson. Then review as needed.

If there are other grammar skills you find students need practice with, review in small groups or with a whole class mini-lesson if needed.

## **Celebration**

Every publishing should end with a celebration to recognize your students' writing growth! We have included colorful certificates and dedication bookplates for books.