

Lesson 10: Writers Need to Have a Clear Topic

Supplies Needed:

- “Ideas for Our Writing Adventures” Blank Anchor Chart
- “Topics We Can Write About” Blank Anchor Chart
- Examples of a fiction story and a nonfiction book to show
- Markers
- What’s My Topic? Anchor Chart

Procedure:

- Gather students and show them both of the books you have chosen. Ask them what they feel is the biggest difference. Guide them to the understanding that one is telling a story and one is teaching about a topic.
- Let students know that both types of book are great for them as writers, but that the most important thing to remember is that, for now, they need to write about things they know and have experienced.
- Display the anchor chart “Ideas for Our Writing Adventures” and ask the class what kinds of stories students in their grade might tell about. Discuss both narratives (stories about things that have happened to them) and fiction stories (with characters, a setting, a problem and a solution).
- Brainstorm some ideas that many students could think about if they decided to write a narrative or fiction story. You might think about dividing the anchor chart into two sides (narrative & fiction) if you think that would be helpful or needed. Some possible ideas/suggestions
 - A family event (trip, reunion, outing)
 - A family member
 - An important time in their lives
 - Something fun that they did
 - A made up story to teach a lesson

- A made up story that tells about a character's adventure
 - A made up story that tells about another place or time
- Next display the anchor chart "Topics We Can Write About" and ask the class what kinds of topics they think they know well and could teach others about. Some possible ideas/suggestions:
 - Pets (dogs, cats, fish, lizards, etc)
 - Sports
 - Activities (drawing, fishing, bike riding, etc)
 - Games
 - Making or creating something
- If students answer with a topic like "frogs" or something similar, be sure to ask them why they feel like they could teach others about that topic. As long as they have a valid reason for giving the answer – for example they have a frog at home or had one in their class last year – then accept the answer and add it to the list. The idea that needs to come across is that if they choose to write to teach about a topic, then they need to have firsthand knowledge of that topic and would consider themselves an "expert" to teach others.
- Send students to their writing spots with the task of opening their Idea Book and thinking of things to add before they begin writing today. Conduct conferences with students and take a look at some of their ideas or help them to brainstorm things they might add to their idea book.
- Gather students and have them bring their Idea Books. Have a few students share the ideas they added or a graphic organizer or draft of something they have begun. Discuss the topic and why the student chose that particular topic to write about.

Notes: _____
