

## Featuring Fandom: Fan Fiction for 11<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA Students

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### Introduction

Whether it is a grocery list, a daily anecdote, or a bedtime tale, stories even in their simplest form are literally all around us. While we live in our own stories, we sometimes forget to power of exploring stories, their history, and their impact on our human experience. Why do stories exist? How does a good conflict have the ability to suck us in and entrance us? Why do some stories stick with use while others leave us the minute after we hear them?

Students in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade have spent most of their academic career reading stories, often against their will. Very rarely do they get to develop their own voice. In the eleventh grade, students have spent years reading and analyzing a variety of texts, but at this time in their life they will be transition into a world where they have complete control over their own stories. As their language arts teacher, it would be a disservice to them if I did not help them explore and develop their own voice.

In the classroom, they get the opportunity to look at American literature with both classic and modern pieces. The first piece of fiction students read for the year is *Of Mice and Men*, which includes motifs of loneliness, the American Dream, and social responsibility. The novel that follows is *We Were Here*, which includes two characters based off of Lennie and George from *Of Mice and Men*. As this can be defined as fan fiction, students will discuss why we read and why similar stories continue to show up in society. Through this lens, students will begin to explore the purpose and meaning behind the literature. They will begin to craft their own pieces of fan fiction continuing the stories of any of the characters in *We Were Here*. They will focus on deeper analysis of various aspects of creative writing: syntax, character development, suspense, dialogue, and theme. They will take a critical look at other pieces of fan fiction as they begin to craft their own versions of fan fiction based on characters in the novel. These stories will be published, added to personal portfolios, and the students will have the opportunity to vote for the best piece. The best piece from each class will be submitted to author Matt de la Pena for review.

### Background

There are three 11<sup>th</sup> grade English teachers in the building. This year I am teaching two sections of College Prep English III and three sections of Team Approach to Mastery English III, which will include both special education students and regular education

students accompanied by a special education teacher. Each class will be made up of up to 34 students. These classes will meet for 90 minutes every other day. These students not only have diverse backgrounds, but they will also come to the class with diverse abilities.

In order to ensure all the needs of my students are met, specifically the students who have specific learning needs, there are multiple diagnostic tests given at the beginning of the year. Both a writing pretest and the Scholastic Reading Intervention test are given to the students. I then use the scores to group students and to differentiate instruction and tasks to cater to students unique needs. In the past, students have displayed reading levels ranging from 4th grade reading level to at or above grade level. All of my classes also use a blended model for instruction. I have a class set of Chromebooks that students use to access Schoology and all of the Google Apps for Education. This often aides in differentiation and provides more opportunities for students to be successful. It also enables me to track students and their mastery of the Common Core standards throughout the year.

American literature is the focus of the 11th grade English curriculum. Students are exposed to all of the 11th and 12th grade Common Core English Language Arts standards - reading, writing, speaking and listening - on different levels. They read a variety of nonfiction articles and fiction pieces, including a novel and novella, and watch numerous speeches. This unit will be taught at the end of the year after students have had ample time to explore arguments and specifically author's purpose. It will follow the novel *We Were Here*, which will be used as a model for narrative writing. Students will work throughout the unit on individual, small group, and whole class activities as they explore author's craft and creative writing. They will then work individually for the culminating project to showcase their understanding and mastery of the standards focused on within this unit.

## **Rationale**

After teaching the same curriculum for two years, I noticed the majority of students identified a difficulty with the writing process. Even those that I would find consumed in the pages of a 300 page novel often expressed frustration when it came to writing essays. Their disdain for the formulaic, analytical essay was apparent, but I realized that these students in their 13-year educational career had rarely, if ever, been given the opportunity to partake in creative writing. Because of the high stakes of testing and lack of time, creative writing is something that is often cut from curriculums. For years, instead of developing their own voice, they have been forced to only analyze the voice of others, putting their responses into a formula to receive their answer.

After reading a novel that each year has the most reluctant readers engaged, this unit will give students the opportunity to intertwine their own stories within those characters that they most relate to. As the students look at each character, each conflict, they will be

thinking about how they could extend the story beyond the pages of the book. Mini-lessons will also be incorporated to focus on syntax, dialogue, theme, and suspense. They will get to develop their voice and through this unit, the distaste and apprehension that usually accompanies writing will dissolve.

## **Objective**

The goal for this unit is to ignite a passion for writing with my students. In doing so, students will display their understanding of suspense, dialogue, characterization, and theme beyond an analytical lens. They will demonstrate mastery by creating their own pieces of fanfiction. To do this, students will use a novel read in the unit before. Some students are left without the satisfaction of knowing what happens to all the characters. Because of this, they will select one character to create either a flashback or a scene from later in life. The relationship they have already built with this character will open up a world of writing where students are given the power - the power to give characters the relationship they wanted, to show a side of the character previously unknown, to create a future for the character.

## **Concepts and Teaching Strategies**

### Narrative

As humans have evolved, so have their stories. Narratives are stories, descriptions of events.<sup>1</sup> Humans have used them since the beginning of time to communicate emotions, build connections, and make meaning. Richler explores their evolution in his documentary explaining the transition from lists to epics and short stories. Why are humans engrossed in social media and video games? How do those narratives give life meaning or purpose? Looking at the history gives insight on the place narratives have in our lives.<sup>2</sup>

No matter the age, people describe themselves using narratives. Through stories, people can show both who they are and why they matter. The question changes from what do you say to how do you say it. Monisha Pasupathi states that all healthy adults, in order to have relationships, must also be able to create and share stories. It is through these stories that people are able to create connections.<sup>3</sup>

Employers today are identifying storytelling as one of the most valuable skills they look for in potential employees. Businesses are, more than ever, using storytelling to reach customers. Viral videos are the new form of advertising and the most influential ones tell stories that stick with us so much that we forget it's a ploy to get us to buy something. People hate watching ads, but love a good story and business have caught on to that. 78 percent say storytelling is the future of marketing.<sup>4</sup> But if we don't give our

students the tools to be successful in a world that expects and values storytelling, we're doing them a disservice. It's important that students have the opportunity to develop these skills before they're tested on them. The class will read multiple examples of narratives to explore their different forms. They will use PALS reading, reciprocal teaching, and silent sustained reading.

## Creative Writing

Creative writing, as mentioned before, is a genre of writing that is often neglected. As a genre, it is defined as "a form of artistic expression" that "draws on the imagination to convey meaning through use of imagery, narrative, and drama."<sup>5</sup> It is writing that gives a generation the opportunity share their thoughts, feelings, and build a voice to comment on what matters the most. Although its place in the classroom is often questioned, its personal benefits are extensive.

The lack of clear beginnings, middles, and ends give creative writing the opportunity to be of therapeutic use. Even in an academic setting, creative writing can offer this personal therapy. This form of writing can be more reflective of real life than the formulaic essay often used in the secondary classroom. Creative writing can give students an outlet for anxieties, fears, concerns that even they didn't know existed in the deep caverns of their psyche.<sup>6</sup> Through this creative writing, students can work on their issues using the characters to employ problem solving of their own social issues. Doing so will also better help them understand the world around them.

Because they are rarely given the opportunity to write creatively and think outside the box, students are sometimes apprehensive. Giving them a base to start through characters they already know and love will give them confidence. It will begin to open their imagination to the possibilities of creative writing and creative thinking. The teacher will give students multiple opportunities to write different lengths of creative writing pieces.

## Empathy

Many teenagers find it difficult to empathize not only with the characters they see in movies or on mainstream TV, as their lives are often drastically different than sunshine, rainbows, mansions, and Maseratis, but also anyone whose life is even slightly different than theirs. This is also an issue many teenagers in general deal with. The inability to see the other side, another's emotions, or understand actions beyond themselves is one that may be related to the underdeveloped prefrontal cortex at that moment in life. It is important that students are given the opportunity to understand empathy and how narratives can be used to build empathy by exposing them to characters of different backgrounds, with different experiences. Empathy, as defined by Suzanne Keen, is "a vicarious, spontaneous sharing of affect." It's often provoked by seeing someone's

emotional state, hearing about someone's situation and emotions, or by reading whether it is literature or non-fiction. 7

Advances in neurological sciences have given researchers the ability to look at what relationship fiction has on empathy. What causes what? Is a student a good reader because they are more empathetic or does a student's affinity to read make him more likely to become more empathetic? Researchers did find an increase in empathy in those where able to identify with characters. Although which one causes which is difficult to determine. Explicitly exploring character identification and narrative situation will aid in student's deeper understanding and empathy of characters.<sup>8</sup> It can also transfer into the real world as students begin to see characters and the similarities of the people who are around them.

### Fanfiction

Fanfiction, or fanfic, as we know it today can most frequently be traced to the wildly popular Star Trek that emerged in the 1970s. Defined by J.E. Reich as "amateur narrative based on already existent novels, movies, television shows, and even IRL celebrities and public personas," fanfic has an even longer history that extends before the 1970s. Reich claims that Shakespeare and even Homer partook in a much more basic version of fanfic with stories inspired by oral traditions and those of Plutarch. <sup>9</sup> Fanfic even extends to popular fairytales and children's stories. Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith put out a fanfic version of the story of the three little pigs. They took a tale as old as time and a fairly under-developed character and gave him a voice. What if there was a logical explanation behind everything the wolf did? What if the Big Bad Wolf wasn't as big and as bad as he was made out to be by the disgruntled little piggies? These plays on characterization, point-of-view, and trustworthy narration add life to a century-old story and in conjunction teach a new lesson about fairness and judgment.

Although the recent explosion of fanfic is not one that can be easily explained, its presence is one that can be easily noted and understood. After reading a good book, readers are often left with questions. Great stories are not left with cookie-cutter endings and all loose ends tied up. What will happen to that character in the next five years? How will these two characters ever live with the turmoil that he left behind? What caused that character to be so crass and soulless? The authors sometimes answer these questions themselves through interviews or if one is lucky, a sequel. But for many readers, these questions unanswered are haunting. Fanfiction gives the reader the opportunity to extend the stories and continue the journeys of the characters who have become much more than that.

What causes a book or specific character to be chosen as an inspiration for fanfiction? A survey conducted by Tara Collins revealed that the majority of fanfic writers chose to use minor, secondary characters as the focus of their stories. Maybe this is because of the

already fully-fleshed out histories of the main protagonist. Maybe, according to Collins, this is because of the sanctity and respect for the author's interpretation of the main character.<sup>10</sup> Students will read two different examples of fanfiction before creating their own.

### Freytag's Pyramid

Freytag's Pyramid is one of the most commonly taught plot structures in education. Students see a triangle and connect it to Freytag. This structure, adapted from German novelist Gustav Freytag, connects more clearly to drama and its three acts, but is still often used to identify and analyze short stories and novels alike.<sup>11</sup>

First, according to Freytag's pyramid, is the exposition. This is where the author sets up the setting, the characters, and even beginning parts of conflict. This exposition then leads into the rising action. It is here that the tension and suspense build. The protagonist in the story begins interacting with the conflict. The complication finally leads into the climax or crisis. It is where the protagonist must face his conflict. After the height of the story, events happen because of the climax and fall into the falling action. The problem must be solved and this happens in the resolution. Matching the exposition is the dénouement where the author often answers questions and ties in theme.<sup>12</sup>

Even though it is the most frequently recognized plot structures, it's not one that modern writers are fond of. Students will be able to connect to it as it mirrors the plot structure of the novella *Of Mice and Men*. The Freytag's pyramid's reliance on the very regimented parts that exist in a drama don't always lend themselves to short stories or novels that are messy, complicated, and often more thought-provoking.

### The Fichtean Curve

The Fichtean Curve is much simpler than the aforementioned pyramid, but is not as often included in curriculums. It focuses on one character, the protagonist, and one specific goal. The protagonist has three or more obstacles that increase in intensity attempting to achieve his goal. He ultimately meets his most difficult encounter, the climax, and then proceeds to the resolution after achieving or failing to achieve his goal.<sup>13</sup>

This plot structure gives students the opportunity to play with stories in a way they haven't experienced before, but one that exists in modern fiction today. Its less linear approach makes it more writer and reader friendly.

### In Media Res

In Media Res literally translates to “into the middle of things.” Much like when reading the novel *We Were Here*, the reader is placed in the middle of the action. The story begins in the middle of crisis with the parts of exposition sprinkled throughout the story. It, like the other story plots, has an upward trajectory with increasing intensity. The suspense builds with crises and flashbacks. It is through these and dialogue that the characters and conflicts are revealed. This all builds to the traditional climax where the protagonist must face the conflict head on. After this, the falling action ensues often with more flashbacks. This then leads to a traditional resolution.<sup>14</sup>

Students who immerse themselves in pop culture will be the most familiar with this. Not only does it mirror the novel they are creating fanfiction about, but it also shows up in popular movies and televisions shows like *How To Get Away With Murder*. This type of story should probably be reserved for students who want a challenge and feel more confident in their writing abilities, as it is not easy feat to skillfully use flashbacks without giving away too much or too little.

### Characterization

Characterization, which differs from simply identifying characters, “invests an identified character with an attribute or set of attributes which add descriptive material of a particular sort to the argument node.”<sup>15</sup> While each character in a piece of fiction does not include the same amount of characterization or any at all, it is important for students to be able to not only identify who characters are, but how they are created and how this allows them to interact with different aspects of stories.

Garvey lays out 13 different elements of characterization:

1. There are two types of characters: those involved in the narrative speech-act and those not involved
2. Narrator or audience could appear in the text surface structure.
3. The narrator may or may not participate in the story’s plot.
4. Narrators may not have the same understanding of the inner lives of all the characters.
5. Characters are invested with attributes.
6. Characters may have differing degrees of different characteristics.
7. Characters and their attributes can change throughout a story.
8. Characters have varying degrees of importance in a narrative.
9. Characters are often pitted against one another, especially if gifted with opposing attributes.
10. Characters can be grouped based off of attributes (i.e. good vs. bad).
11. There may be conflicts with each other or with forces that are external.
12. A character may have allegorical significance.
13. There are both direct and indirect identifications of attributes.<sup>16</sup>

Students and their interaction with the different elements of characterization will give them the opportunity to delve deeper into the characters that they previously interacted with. This will help them understand the characters and further mold their pieces of fanfiction.

## Suspense

Suspense in simplest terms is “a state or feeling of excited or anxious uncertainty about what may happen.”<sup>17</sup> Students understand suspense as it relates to scary movies, but are not usually able to identify the relationship of narrative pacing and the suspense it creates. Students even in telling their own narratives spend too much time elaborating on details that are irrelevant or giving away too much too soon.

Because the ability to hook readers through suspense, this is one method students should work to incorporate in their pieces. New York Times writer Lee Child suggests it is much simpler than expected. As a writer, one should merely employ a question at the beginning of the story, but then wait and delay the answer to said question. Tactics like this have been used in advertising for ages. Leaving the audience guessing keeps them engaged until the end because human nature needs answers to questions.<sup>18</sup> Especially in the age of instant gratification and Google, one is used to having any question answered in milliseconds, but what happens when a question can’t be answered immediately? The audience becomes hooked. This method is used by novelists, playwrights, and script writers alike. Simply having students develop a question that will intrigue the audience will give them an easy way to utilize a complicated engagement tool.

Another method students can employ is the varying of sentence structures. The use of short declarative sentences within a story can create a sense of urgency; thus, building suspense.

## Dialogue

Students know dialogue in a very basic sense. They can separate the speech of characters from the rest of the text by identifying the quotation marks and the tags that accompany it, but there is so much to be learned in relation to analyzing the impact dialogue can have. Dialogue gives readers insight into characters feelings: who they trust, how they’re feeling, what they want. Looking at the text that surrounds the dialogue can also shine light on how the dialogue is being said, potentially changing the meaning of the words that fall between the quotation marks.

When writing dialogue, students have difficulty identifying what should be included in a conversation. They take their own conversations and think they need to be captured



in their entirety, providing every “hello” and “okay.” Focusing on dialogue that will help move the plot forward will improve their stories and their character development. There is also a need to look at the skill that is grounding dialogue. Dialogue and its impact can be heavily influenced by the words around the speech. The use of imagery and descriptive language can show a characters emotions and connections to the spoken language.

## Theme

Theme is taught nearly every year. Students, even in elementary school, are asked to find the “main idea or underlying meaning”<sup>19</sup> in stories. Being able to pull out the meaning from a text is a weakness for many students. They can answer basic comprehension questions, but when they are asked how and why, they are at a loss for words. It requires empathy, critical thinking, and deeper analysis. But if students are able to work through strategies to develop a theme of their own through creative writing, it may aid with their future understanding of stories.

Finding the theme is directly connected to characters. Understanding where the characters come from and why they are the way they are is an important starting point. Then, by analyzing the plot and the resolution, a reader can see the trials the characters have encountered. It is most important to see how the character transitions. What are the character’s changes? What have they learned? What did it take in order for them to learn this? These questions and their answers can shine light on the lesson we, as the readers, should learn to.

Tom Hallman, Jr. discusses having a clear focus on theme before writing even begins. What is the story about? Why does it matter? The importance of starting with a purpose and sticking to that improves writing.<sup>20</sup> As a writer one must fully think out where the characters are going, what lesson is to be learned. The outcome is a better, more meaningful story.

## Classroom Activities

### Lesson One: Learning about FanFiction

*Lesson Essential Question:* Why do authors create FanFiction?

This lesson will introduce students to what FanFiction is. They will read and explore fairytales retold using the concept of FanFiction. Students will use graphic organizers to compare and contrast aspects of the original stories with the retold versions. After reading the stories, students will discuss what makes FanFiction and what leads writers to create these stories.

*Warm Up:* Students will respond to the following prompt: As children, we often hear the story of the three little pigs. With as much detail as you can remember, tell the story in your own words.

*Pre-reading:* As a class, we will watch the YouTube video “Fairy Tales – The 3 Little Pigs Story.”<sup>21</sup> Students will turn and summarize the story with their shoulder partner.

*Reading 1:* Each group will be handed a copy of *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by Jon Scieszka. As they are reading they will complete the “Three Little Pigs Compare and Contrast” graphic organizer (Appendix A). Students will compare the original story presented in the video to the one they read.

*Whole Class:* After students have identified differences between the two stories, the teacher will provide students with the definition of fanfiction. The teacher will ask the students to identify how *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* classifies as a piece of fanfiction.

*Reading 2:* Individuals will read the article “Fanspeak: The Brief Origins of Fanfiction” by J.E. Reich. As they read, they will highlight evidence that will help them answer the lesson essential question.

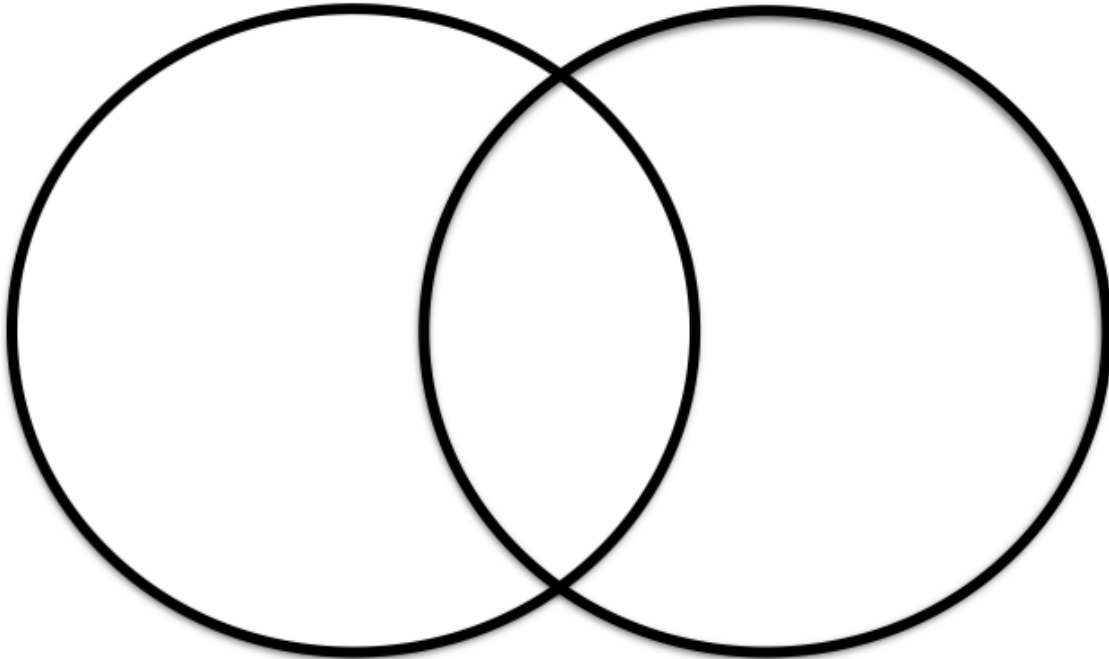
*Exit Ticket:* Students will respond to the lesson essential question using their notes from the graphic organizer and the article to speculate why the changes were made from the original story of the three little pigs.

## The Three Little Pigs Compare and Contrast Graphic Organizer

**Directions:** Using the graphic organizer below, list the important parts of each story to compare and contrast both stories. In the middle section, identify parts of the story that are consistent between the two.

The Three Little Pigs

The True Story of the Three Little Pigs



Lesson Two: The Structure of Short Stories

*Lesson Essential Question:* How does structure impact the engagement of the audience?

*Warm Up:* Students will respond to the following writing prompt: Which character from *We Were Here* would you choose to extend the story of?

*Whole Class:* The class will review the “Fanfiction Project” assignment sheet. The teacher will explain that this will be the end goal, but the next couple of classes will be the stepping stones to get there. The class will look at drawings of two different short story plot structures: the Fichtean Curve and Freytag’s Pyramid. Students will add these definitions to their “Story Structures” graphic organizer.

*Partner Work:* Each pair will be handed two short stories: “Lamb to the Slaughter” by Roald Dahl and “Harrison Bergeron” by Kurt Vonnegut. Neither story is an example of fanfiction, but they will be examples of plot structure. As students read, they will summarize the plot points in the “Story Structures” graphic organizer. After completing the graphic organizer, students will spend 10 minutes discussing with their partner the plot points of their stories. Both will discuss which plot structure was used and

*Exit Ticket:* Students will respond to two questions. First, they will answer the lesson essential question using their graphic organizer and partner discussions. Then, they will identify which type of story structure they would like to use for their own piece of fanfiction.

## Fanfiction Writing Assignment

Fanfiction is defined as “amateur narrative based on already existent novels, movies, television shows, and even IRL celebrities and public personas.” For this writing, you will have the opportunity to show off your creative writing skills and imagination. Your task is to take one of Matt De la Pena’s characters and extend his or her story beyond the pages of his book. You can choose to set this short story as a flashback, in the present, or in the future. See the rubric below for how your final copy will be graded.

Narrative 11-12 Description	4 Beyond	3 Proficient	2 Progressing	1 Beginning
<p><b>Exposition:</b> Sets up a story by introducing the event/conflict, characters, and setting.</p>	<p>The text <i>creatively engages</i> the reader by setting out a <i>well-developed</i> conflict, situation, or observation and its significance. The text <i>establishes</i> one or multiple points of view and <i>introduces</i> a narrator and/or complex characters.</p>	<p>The text orients the reader by setting out a conflict, situation, or observation and its significance. It <i>establishes one or multiple point(s) of view</i> and <i>introduces</i> a narrator and/or developed characters.</p>	<p>The text provides a setting with a <i>vague</i> conflict, situation, or observation with an <i>unclear point of view</i>. It <i>introduces</i> a narrator and/or <i>underdeveloped</i> characters.</p>	<p>The text provides a setting that may be <i>unclear</i> with a <i>vague</i> conflict, situation, or observation. It has an <i>unclear point of view</i> and <i>underdeveloped</i> narrator and/or characters.</p>
<p><b>Narrative Techniques and Development:</b> The story is developed using dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines.</p>	<p>The text demonstrates <i>deliberate and effective use of narrative techniques</i> such as engaging dialogue, pacing, vivid description, reflection, and multiple plot lines to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</p>	<p>The text <i>uses narrative techniques</i> such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines that illustrate and develop experiences, events and/or characters.</p>	<p>The text uses <i>some narrative techniques</i> such as dialogue or description that <i>merely retells</i> events and or/experiences.</p>	<p>The text may <i>lack narrative techniques</i> and <i>merely retells</i> events and/or experiences.</p>
<p><b>Organization and Cohesion:</b> The text follows a logical sequence of events.</p>	<p>The text <i>creates a purposeful and logical progression</i> of experiences or events <i>using a variety of techniques</i> – such as chronology,</p>	<p>The text <i>creates a logical progression</i> of experiences or events using <i>a variety of techniques</i> – such as chronology, flashback,</p>	<p>The text <i>creates a sequence or progression</i> of experiences or events.</p>	<p>The text may <i>lack a sequence or progression</i> of experiences or events or present an <i>illogical</i> sequence of events.</p>

	flashback, foreshadowing, suspense, etc. – to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome.		foreshadowing, suspense, etc. – to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome. (i.e. sense of mystery or growth)		
<b>Style and Conventions:</b> The text uses sensory language and details to create a vivid picture of the events, setting, and characters.	The text <i>uses precise words and phrases</i> , showing details and <i>rich</i> sensory language and mood <i>to convey a realistic picture</i> of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.		The text <i>uses precise words and phrases</i> , telling details and sensory <i>language to convey a vivid picture</i> of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.	The text <i>uses words and phrases</i> and telling <i>details to convey</i> experiences, events, settings, and/or characters.	The text may <i>merely tell</i> about experiences, events, settings, and/or characters.
<b>Conclusion:</b> The text provides a conclusion that follows from the course of the narrative. The conclusion provides a reflection on or resolution of the events.	The text <i>moves to a conclusion that logically follows from and thoughtfully reflects</i> on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.		The text <i>provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects</i> on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.	The text <i>provides a conclusion that follows</i> from what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.	The text <i>may provide a weak conclusion</i> to the events of the narrative.

## Story Structures

### The Fichtean Curve

Definition	Drawing Example

### Freytag's Pyramid

Definition	Drawing Example

Circle the short story you read:

“Lamb to the Slaughter”      “Harrison Bergeron”

In the box below, plot the important parts of the story to help you identify which structure was used.

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### Lesson Three: Pre-Writing

*Lesson Essential Question:* What pre-writing activities can be used to best plan a piece of fanfiction?

*Warm Up:* Students will respond to the PollEverywhere question: What pre-writing strategies have you used before? The responses will be displayed on the SmartBoard in the form of a word cloud.

*Whole Class:* The teacher will review three types of pre-writing strategies used with fiction writing: word association brainstorming, imaging, and free-writing. Each activity will be defined on the “Pre-Writing” graphic organizer.

*Individual Activity:* For 10 minutes, students will write under the section word association. Under that section is a word bank with the following words: growth, understanding, beach, family, basketball, independence. These are all words that could spark ideas for their fanfiction stories. After the 10 minutes is over, students will move on to the next section. Three images will be placed on the board: one representing friendship; one, family; and one, freedom. Students will have another 10 minutes to write anything they can using those images for inspiration. For the final 10 minutes, students will practice free-writing. They will write anything and everything about the character of their choice from *We Were Here*. They will write this under the section free-writing in their graphic organizer.


For the remainder of class, students will try to continue pre-writing and organizing their stories by selecting one way to show how their story will be structured. They will submit the “Pre-Writing” graphic organizer, which will be assessed based off of participation.

*Exit Ticket:* Students will reflect on the pre-writing strategies used to answer the exit tickets. In addition, they will set two goals for where they want to be writing by the end of the next lesson and by the end of the week.

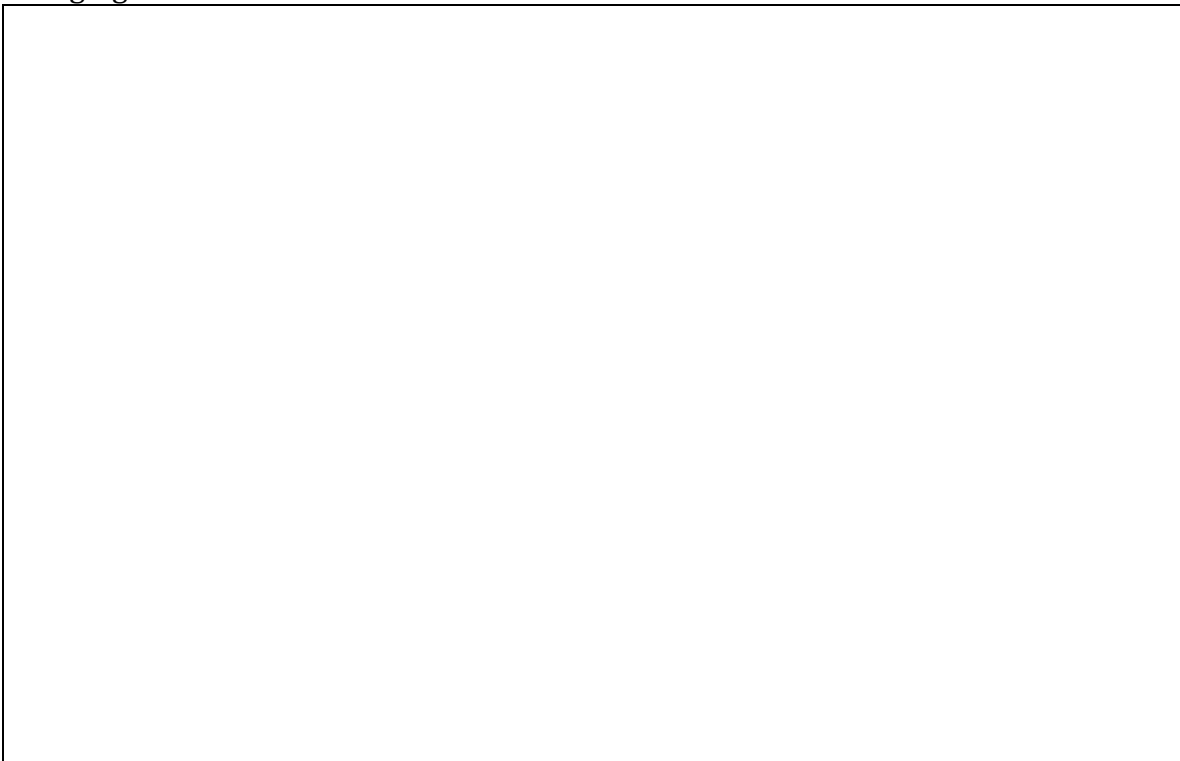


## Pre-Writing Graphic Organizer

Word Association

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for students to write down words associated with a topic.

Imaging

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for students to draw or describe visual images related to a topic.

Free-Writing

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for free-writing. It occupies the majority of the page's width and height below the title.

## Lesson Four: Draft One

*Lesson Essential Question:* How can pre-writing be used to create a first draft of a short story?

*Warm Up:* Students will reflect on their past experiences writing. They will identify what areas are their strengths with creative writing and what areas they want to improve on.

*Whole Class:* Teacher should ask one student to use pre-writing materials. The teacher will demonstrate for students how to use pre-writing information by writing the beginning of a short story based off the graphic organizer.

*Individual Activity:* Using Google Docs, students will write their first draft of their narrative piece. Although the students will be graded with a rubric, their first draft will only be graded on two items: length and character development. First drafts should be at least a page in length and focus on one particular character from *We Were Here*. Writers will have to stick to what is actually possible based off of the research done on characters throughout the novel. The teacher will work to provide meaningful feedback and return drafts the following class.

## Lesson Five: Revising for Dialogue

*Lesson Essential Question:* How does dialogue enhance the development of characters, set the mood, and move the plot forward?

*Warm Up:* This piece of dialogue from the novel *We Were Here* will be on display for students. They will answer the following question: What does this conversation reveal about the characters?

*Whole Class:* The teacher will review the definition of dialogue and list the three main ways it can improve a story. Each group will be assigned a different reason for using dialogue. They will then use both short stories from the previous lessons to analyze. They will highlight dialogue and identify the strongest example of their assigned reason.

*Individual Activity:* Students will then be tasked with revising the dialogue in their stories. They will spend the remainder of class doing it.

*Exit Ticket:* Students will select one excerpt of dialogue from their own story. They will identify how this either develops the characters, sets the mood, or moves the plot forward.

## Lesson Six: Peer Editing

*Lesson Essential Question:* How does peer editing aid in the revision process?

*Whole Class:* The teacher will go over the expectations for peer editing. Students will discuss what makes constructive feedback and will provide examples of strong vs. weak feedback.

*Individual Activity:* Students will post their drafts in a discussion in Schoology, the learning management system. They will then select one other post in the discussion to peer review. As they review they will complete the “Peer Feedback” document to specifically look for use of dialogue and character development.

*Exit Ticket:* Students will identify out of 10 how they would rate their peer’s story. They will explain why they gave their peer that specific score. Students will also submit a link to the teacher for another round of feedback.

## **Peer Feedback**

Directions: Select one of the links in the Schoology discussion to peer edit. Use this document to guide your feedback.

1. Who is the main character of the short story?
2. What is the main character’s goal?
3. Does the character achieve his goal? How do you know?
4. What lesson do you think the character learned?
5. What structure did the author use?
6. Highlight each time the author uses dialogue. Do the conversations move the plot forward, develop the characters, or set the mood? If not, how could they be improved?

## Lesson Seven: Final Revisions

*Warm Up:* Students will review the rubric. They will identify based off of that rubric, how they would currently score their own stories and why.

*Individual Activity:* Students will use feedback from both their peers and the teacher to create final revisions of their stories. After final submissions, the teacher will select three top stories for publication. All students will read the stories and vote on what they deem is the best of the three stories. The final story will be submitted for review to author Matt De la Pena.

## Resources

### Teacher Bibliography

Collins, Tara. "Filling the Gaps: What's Happening in the World of FanFiction." *Library Media Connection* 24 (January 2006): 36-38. Accessed November 15, 2016. ERIC. This piece highlights the trend of FanFiction. It will give educators a look at what this new section of fiction is and why it is important.

"Penn (William) High School." State of Delaware, 2016.  
<http://profiles.doe.k12.de.us/SchoolProfiles/School/Default.aspx?checkSchool=490&districtCode=34> State of Delaware demographic information for William Penn High School.

### Student Reading List

Dahl, Roald. "Lamb to the Slaughter." Harper's Magazine, 1953. This short story is going to be used by students as an anchor short story for students to learn about the various types of story structures.

De la Pena, Matt. *We Were Here*. New York: Random House, 2009. This novel is expected to be read in its entirety before beginning this unit. It will be used as the inspiration for the fanfiction pieces.

Reich, J.E. "Fanspeak: The Brief Origins of Fanfiction." *Tech Times*. Accessed December 12, 2016. <http://www.techtimes.com/articles/70108/20150723/fan-fiction-star-trek-harry-potter-history-of-fan-fiction-shakespeare-roman-mythology-greek-mythology-sherlock-holmes.htm> This article discusses the

origins of fanfiction and how it has impacted the world of literature. Students will read this as an introduction to this type of fiction.

Scieszka, Jon. *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*. New York: Puffin Books, 1989. This will be used in the introduction of fanfiction for the first unit. Students will read, analyze, and compare to the original.

Vonnegut, Kurt. "Harrison Bergeron." 1961. This short story is going to be used by students as an anchor short story for students to learn about the various types of story structures.

#### Classroom Materials

- Chromebooks: students will use Chrome books to write their short stories. They will also use them to revise and publish their stories at the end of the unit.
- Smartboard: A Smartboard or projector will be necessary for the teacher to present on specific mini-lessons and provide whole class instruction.

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#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/narrative>

<sup>2</sup> Richler, Noah. A Short History of Story. Episode 1

<sup>3</sup> Julie Beck, "Life's Stories," *The Atlantic*, August 10, 2015 accessed November 10, 2016, <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2015/08/life-stories-narrative-psychology-redemption-mental-health/400796/>

<sup>4</sup> Shane Snow, "Why Storytelling Will Be the Biggest Business Skill of the Next 5 Years," *Hubspot*, February 24, 2014, accessed November 7, 2016, <https://blog.hubspot.com/opinion/why-storytelling-will-be-the-biggest-business-skill-of-the-next-5-years>

<sup>5</sup> "Creative Writing." *Writing Studio: Duke University*, accessed October 15, 2016, <https://twp.duke.edu/uploads/assets/creative%20writing.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Gillie Bolton. *The Therapeutic Potential of Creative Writing: Writing Myself* (Philadelphia: Jessica Kinglsey Publishing, 1999)

<sup>7</sup> Suzanne Keen, "A Theory of Narrative Empathy," *Narrative 14*, no. 3 (2006): 208

<sup>8</sup> Suzanne Keen, "A Theory of Narrative Empathy," *Narrative 14*, no. 3 (2006): 215-216

<sup>9</sup> J. J. Reich, "Fanspeak: The Brief Origins of FanFiction," *Tech Times*, July 23, 2015, accessed November 10, 2016, <http://www.techtimes.com/articles/70108/20150723/fan-fiction-star-trek-harry-potter-history-of-fan-fiction-shakespeare-roman-mythology-greek-mythology-sherlock-holmes.htm>

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<sup>10</sup> Tara Collins, "Filling in the Gaps: What's Happening in the World of FanFiction," *Library Media Connection* 24, no. 3 (2006): 36-38

<sup>11</sup> <https://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/documents/Freytag.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> "Analyzing a Story's Plot: Freytag's Pyramid," Hartley Fiction and Drama Unit, accessed November 12, 2016,

<http://www.ohio.edu/people/hartleyg/ref/fiction/freytag.html>

<sup>13</sup> Ingrid Sundberg, "To Plot or Not To Plot," *Ingrid Sundberg* (blog), May 25, 2011, <http://ingridsundberg.com/2011/05/26/to-plot-or-not-to-plot/>

<sup>14</sup> Kristen Kieffer, "3 Awesome Plot Structures for Building Bestsellers," *She's Novel* (blog), <https://www.shesnovel.com/blog/3-awesome-plot-structures-for-building-bestsellers>

<sup>15</sup> James Garvin, "Characterization in Narrative," *Poetics* 7, no. 1 (1978): 63-78

<sup>16</sup> James Garvin, "Characterization in Narrative," *Poetics* 7, no. 1 (1978): 63-78

<sup>17</sup> <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/suspense>

<sup>18</sup> Lee Child, "A Simple Way to Create Suspense," *The New York Times*, December 8, 2012, accessed December 1, 2016,

<https://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/12/08/a-simple-way-to-create-suspense/>

<sup>19</sup> "Theme," *Literary Devices*, accessed December 1, 2016,

<http://literarydevices.net/theme/>

<sup>20</sup> Tom Hallman, "Before Writing, Find the Story's Theme," *Quill*, April 9, 2014, accessed December 1, 2016, [http://www.spj.org/quill\\_issue.asp?ref=2102](http://www.spj.org/quill_issue.asp?ref=2102)

## **Appendix A**

### **Implementing District Standards**

This unit will strive to accomplish several learning goals that align with the Common Core standards for the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. They will be the anchors that will drive the instruction throughout this unit. Specifically, this unit will focus on writing narratives to develop either real or imagined events. They will work to engage the reader using different methods. Students will use narrative techniques like dialogue and pacing. They may even create multiple plot lines. Students will have the opportunity to work on sequencing the events in their stories to build suspense or to work towards the resolution. Through using precise words students will work on word choice and imagery. Finally, they will create a conclusion that resolves the conflict within their story.

After writing their stories, students will develop and strengthen their writing by planning and revising for their specific purpose and audience. They will finally use technology to publish their writing.

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**Curriculum Unit Title**

Featuring Fandom

**Author**

Tiffany Kannengieszer

**KEY LEARNING, ENDURING UNDERSTANDING, ETC.**

Students will be able to analyze the structure used in short stories.

Students will be able to write short stories as pieces of fanfiction.

Students will be able to edit, revise, and publish pieces of fiction.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR THE UNIT**

Why do authors create fanfiction?  
How does structure impact the engagement of the audience?  
What pre-writing activities can be used to best plan a piece of fiction?  
How can pre-writing be used to create a first draft of a short story?  
How does dialogue enhance the development of characters, set the mood, and drive the plot forward?  
How does peer editing aid in the revision process?

**CONCEPT A**

Fanfiction

**CONCEPT B**

Pre-writing

**CONCEPT C**

The Writing Process

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION A**

Why do authors create fanfiction?

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION B**

What pre-writing activities can be used to best plan a piece of fiction?  
How can pre-writing be used to create a first draft of a short story?

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION C**

How does dialogue enhance the development of characters, set the mood, and drive the plot forward?  
How does peer editing aid in the revision process?

**VOCABULARY A**

Fanfiction

**VOCABULARY B**

pre-writing,  
Fichtean Curve,  
Freytags Pyramid,  
free writing

**VOCABULARY C**

revision, dialogue,  
plot