Children’s Picture Book Project

Students will plan, write, illustrate, and publish a unique children’s picture book.

**Picture Book needs:**
- 12-14 pages in length
- Have text on each page
- Have 8-14 illustrations
- Have an cover with an original title and illustration
  - Look professional

**Preparation:**
- Bring your favorite picture book from childhood.
- Answer the questions from the Children’s Book Review Guide about your book.
- Be prepared to share your book with the class

**Day One:**
- In groups of 3 share your favorite picture book.
- Share 3 reasons this is your favorite book-use examples from the book
- Discuss the Children’s Book Review Guide with your group
- Decide what characteristics or guidelines are needed for a successful children’s book.
- Group shares their guidelines with the class

**Day Two:**
- Discuss project: composing the text and illustrations for their own children’s picture book. (refer to the grading rubric)
- Brainstorm themes that you noticed in the stories: (ie. Fear, acceptance, change, family)
- “I Remember” Journal: Describe (using all 5 senses) a memory from childhood—can be happy, sad, scary, exciting. If the memory is incomplete you can add details (even if they are not real!)
- Have volunteers share their memories
- Homework: come up with plot and character ideas

**Day Three:**
- Expand on memory journal by brainstorming additional details.
- In the library go to: [http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/storymap/](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/storymap/)
• Complete and Print the following graphic organizers:
  o Character Map
  o Conflict Map
  o Resolution Map
  o Setting Map

Day Four:
• Complete the Plot Pitch Template, complete the main ideas for the story.
• Complete the Story Map for your story (finish as homework)

Day Five:
• “Pitch” (present) your idea with a partner
• Answer the Plot Pitch Peer Questions on a separate sheet of paper for your partner’s story.
• Discuss and brainstorm ideas to improve the story

Day Six:
• Divide several 8.5 x 11 sheets of paper into four to six boxes. These boxes represent the pages in your book. There should be enough boxes to represent each page of the book as well as the cover. This is your storyboard.
• Sketch the illustrations and text for each page and the cover in a pane of the storyboard. You should have a balance of text and illustrations.
• This is a rough draft—not the final product.
• Experiment with location, size, and amount of text and illustrations on each page.
• Discuss storyboards with a partner.

Day Seven:
• Create your final product.
• Books can the size of a full sheet of paper, or folded in half.
• Write your final copy
• Create your final illustrations
• Bind your book.

Day Eight:
• SHARE YOUR STORY WITH THE CLASS (or with a group)
• TURN IN FINAL PRODUCT!
Children’s Book Review Guide

Title____________________________ Author_________________ # of pages___

Step One: Complete all areas of the plot chart.

Step Two: Respond in writing to the questions in areas A, B, and C.

Area A: Text

6. The text of a children’s book is usually organized into simple sentences and short paragraphs. How is the text organized in the book that you have chosen to review? Explain whether this organization was sufficient for the story that this book is telling.

2. Children’s book authors often employ literary tools to help make the story more vivid in the readers’ minds. Commonly used literary tools are rhythm, alliteration, repetition, refrains, onomatopoeia, simile, personification, rhyme, and imagery. Identify three different areas in the text where a literary tool has been employed. For each example you identify, state the type of literary tool that is used and how the employment of the tool helps support the story.

3. Identify two areas in the text that use a question or other device to help move the reader to the next page.

Area B: Illustrations

6. Some picture books have an illustration on the front cover that presents the main conflict or point of the story. Identify two or more elements from the front cover of the book you are reviewing and explain how they relate to the story.
2. What is the primary medium (collage, drawings, photographs, etc.) used in the illustrations?

3. Identify the illustration that in your opinion is the most effective in developing the story as a whole. Explain how two or more elements in the illustration help support and develop the story.

4. Identify two elements that are repeated throughout a majority of the illustrations. Explain how these elements support the story.

Area C: Characterization

6. What is the easily identifiable dominant trait of the story’s main character?

2. Identify a character trait of the main character that is established through the text.

3. Identify a character trait of the main character that is established through the illustrations.

4. Identify two character traits of the main character that young children identify or sympathize with.

5. What was the main problem that the main character faces in the book? How is this problem similar to a problem that most children have faced before?

6. Sometimes a children’s book character will solve the main conflict on his or her own. How did the character in the book you selected turn to self-reliance to solve the main conflict of the story?

Step Three: Share your responses in steps one and two with your peers. Rate the Book giving a score of 1-10 (1 for poor, 10 for fantastic) in each category:

Plot: ___________ Illustration: ________________
Text: ___________ Characterization: ________________
### Guidelines for a Successful Children’s Book

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plot</th>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Illustrations</th>
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### Brainstorming the Conflict

1. What is the conflict? In one sentence, describe the conflict the main character will face in your story.

2. How will it be dealt with? In the left column, list actions that the main character will take to deal with the main conflict. In the right column, list complications that would or could result from the action listed in the left column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Complication</th>
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Plot Pitch Template

Use the template below as a guide for organizing the text of your story.

- This template is a suggestion of how the text of a 14-page children’s picture storybook could be organized. It does not include the illustrations.

- Boxes 1 and 8 are one-page spreads. *Boxes 2-7 represent two-page spreads

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Introduce characters. Establish the setting.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Introduce the main conflict.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Actions taken to deal with the conflict. Resulting complications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Actions taken to deal with the conflict. Resulting complications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Actions taken to deal with the conflict. Resulting complications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Climax. Presentation of the correct action for solving the conflict.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Examination of the main character’s feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Resolution. (&quot;Tuck in&quot; the main character.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Plot Pitch Peer Questions

Use the following questions to help develop feedback during the plot pitch peer session activity.

1. Does the main character have one or more identifiable traits that appeal to children?

2. Is the conflict something that a child will understand?

3. Does the main character attempt at least three different actions in an endeavor to solve the conflict?

4. Is the conflict resolved through the main character’s self-reliance?

5. Overall, does the plot have “turnability” potential? Will the reader be drawn in by the plot and want to turn each page to find out what happens next?

6. Will the reader care about what happens to the main character?

7. Where are the more exciting places?

8. Where are the places that need more “zip” added to them?
Your Plot Outline

**Title:** _____________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Introduce character &amp; setting</th>
<th>2. Intro main conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Intro main conflict</td>
<td>4. Actions taken to resolve conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Resulting complications</td>
<td>6. Actions taken to resolve conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Resulting complications</td>
<td>8. Actions taken to resolve conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Climax, correct action for conflict</td>
<td>12. Examination of main character’s feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Examination of main character’s feelings</td>
<td>14. Resolution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tips for Writing a Children’s Picture Storybook

Definition
Children’s Picture Storybook—A work written for children that uses both text and illustrations to present a simple plot.

Format
Most picture books average 30 pages, consisting of 14 to 16 two-page spreads. A spread is the two pages of an open book.

Text
- The text of a children’s book should be organized into simple sentences and short paragraphs.
- The use of active verbs will keep the story vivid in the reader’s mind.
- Children’s book authors employ literary tools to help make the story more vivid in the reader’s mind. Rhythm, alliteration, repetition, refrains, onomatopoeia, simile, personification, rhyme, and imagery are commonly used devices.
- Consider ending each page with a question or other method that sparks the reader’s curiosity for what will happen next.
- Repeating a phrase throughout the story will help hold your reader’s attention.
- Use a question at the end of the page to help move your reader to the next page.

Illustrations
- Some picture books have an illustration on the front cover that presents the main conflict or point of the story.
- The illustrations are usually created after the text has been written.
- Illustrations serve as a partner to the text.

Characterization
- The main character should have one or two easily identifiable dominant traits.
- Present the traits of your characters through both the illustrations and text.
- Young children should be able to easily identify with the dominant traits.
- Avoid using text to present detailed descriptions of what the characters look like. Let the illustrations present the physical details of the character.

Conflict
- Limit your story to just one conflict that the main character must overcome.
- The main character should be able to deal with the main conflict in concrete terms.
- The main character should resolve the conflict him- or herself.
- Four of the most common types of conflict are individual vs. individual, individual vs. society, individual vs. nature, and individual vs. self.
- Some of the most common concerns of children include acceptance by others, family dynamics, physical growth (especially size and looks), and fear of the unknown (e.g., learning something new, participating in a new activity, going to a new place, getting lost).

Plot
- A solid, well-developed plot is essential to creating a good children’s book.
- The resolution of the conflict should teach a lesson. However, the lesson should not be told in a didactic way but instead be presented indirectly through the plot.
- Jump right into the main conflict of the story.
- Flashbacks should be used with
Publishing Tips

Keep these tips in mind as you prepare to write the final copy and publish your children’s picture book.

Text tips:

- Proofread the text before placing it in the final copy of your book. The short, compact nature of children’s picture books does not leave room for error. Even one mistake in the text can ruin the entire work.

Illustration tips:

- Pay attention to copyright for the images that you use.

- Don’t worry that your artwork is not “good enough” to use as illustrations. The illustrations should serve as a visual communication of the plot. Simply drawn stick figures are all that is needed if the story is well-written. The children’s book *Harold and the Purple Crayon* is a good example of this.

Book-binding tips:

- Staple the book on the side. Then glue a strip of ribbon or construction paper over the staples for a more aesthetically pleasing look.

- Tape the pages together. Again, you can decorate the spine with ribbon or construction paper.

### Grading Rubric for the Children’s Picture Storybook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cover</strong></td>
<td>Title and illustration on cover clearly relate to the story and entice readers to pick up the book.</td>
<td>Title and illustration clearly relate to the story.</td>
<td>Title and illustration are poorly done or do not relate to the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Text</strong></td>
<td>The font and legibility of the text do not interfere with or disrupt communication of ideas to the reader in any area of the work.</td>
<td>The font and legibility of the text interfere with but do not disrupt the communication of ideas to the reader.</td>
<td>The font and legibility of the text interfere with and disrupt the communication of ideas to the reader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar and Spelling</strong></td>
<td>There are no grammar or spelling errors anywhere in the work.</td>
<td>One or two grammar or spelling errors occur in the work.</td>
<td>Three or more grammar or spelling errors occur in the work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of Literary Devices</strong></td>
<td>Three different literary devices are used in the work.</td>
<td>Two different literary devices are used in the work.</td>
<td>One or no literary devices are used in the work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plot Development</strong></td>
<td>All five areas of the plot (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution) are present and are clearly developed.</td>
<td>One of the five areas of the plot (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution) is not present and/or is not clearly developed.</td>
<td>Two or more of the five areas of the plot (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution) are not present and/or are not clearly developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Illustrations’ Support of the Plot</strong></td>
<td>The illustrations help present the plot throughout all areas in the work.</td>
<td>The illustrations help present the plot in a majority of areas throughout the work.</td>
<td>The illustrations help present the plot in only a minority of areas throughout the work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Execution of Illustrations</strong></td>
<td>Illustrations are neat and visually pleasing throughout the entire work.</td>
<td>Illustrations are neat and visually pleasing throughout a majority of the work.</td>
<td>Illustrations need more details and attention to visual appearance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: _________ x 5 = ______________/105