



Lesson ELA 3B

The Mystery of Storytelling

In this lesson, students will use the FFOE Thinking Strategy to write a well-structured narrative piece based on clues found in illustrations, titles, and captions from *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*. Students will use their imaginations and brainstorm ideas that include the elements of an intriguing story. Students should recognize that stories can be told many different ways and no matter where the planning begins, the final product should include a sequence of events. A strategy that might help in narrative writing is to start with the “heart” or middle of the story and build the beginning and ending from there. Students will be asked to write, evaluate, share and discuss their ideas.

Anchor Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3

Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

RL 3.3 - Describe characters in a story (e.g., traits, motivations, feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

W 3.3 - Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

3.3a - Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.

3.3b - Use dialogue and descriptions and actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.

Time Frame: ~60 minutes

It is recommended that the lesson be completed in one session, or in two to help students develop their writing more thoroughly. It is also recommended that this lesson be done toward the end of the year.

Materials

Comic Strip - <https://www.gocomics.com/garfield/2021/07/17>

Sticky notes

Student writing notebooks or word document for writing/typing story

The Mysteries of Harris Burdick by Chris Van Allsburg (1 book per teacher)

- ARCHIE SMITH, BOY WONDER: *A tiny voice asked, "Is he the one?"*
- UNDER THE RUG: *Two weeks passed and it happened again.*
- UNINVITED GUESTS: *He was sure he had seen the doorknob turn.*
- THE THIRD-FLOOR BEDROOM: *It all began when someone left the window open.*

The Chronicles of Harris Burdick: Fourteen Amazing Authors Tell the Tale (6 per teacher)

The Mysteries of Harris Burdick Posters (1-2 per teacher)

Engage



Begin by reviewing with students how to read a comic (look at the picture and read the text in the first box before moving to the next box, etc.) Show the *middle frame only* (to start) of the Garfield Comic strip (crumple, crumple, crumple). Discuss how the middle of the story is the heart of the story and where the most exciting action takes place.

Ask students:

- *"Take a look at this image. Close your eyes and visualize what YOU think is happening in this story and what caused this to happen."* (Visualize)
- *"How many ideas can we generate to write a caption based on this picture?"* (FFOE)

Have a class discussion in which students generate ideas of what might be happening. Teacher writes a list of ideas on the board or chart paper of possible captions.

Next, show students the whole comic strip. Then, ask students:

"Which of our ideas is the most unique or unusual?" (FFOE)

Explore

Introduce *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* by Chris Van Allsburg. Do not read



the whole story, but introduce the book. Paraphrase the introduction for students to understand this book is made up of many different drawings and story ideas to go along with the pictures. Each picture stands alone. Harris Burdick's life is a mystery; he left us with clues about his disappearance, similar to the "clues" that he left us in each picture.

Say to the students,

"Today, we started off by looking at the Garfield comic strip and explored different story ideas based on one picture. We also zoomed in on the middle of our comic and brainstormed story ideas. We are now going to look at the pictures from The Mysteries of Harris Burdick, and you will have the opportunity to write your own story based on what you see. When you are thinking about your story, start by visualizing the heart of our story."

(Teacher Note: The heart of a story is the main event or problem in the story.)

Explain to students that they will choose one of these pictures to develop a well-structured story based around that event (the heart of the story).

Students will choose one image and brainstorm/visualize the story that surrounds the clues that the author gives us, building from the image and caption. (Refer to book/posters for images and captions.)

Question:

- *Visualize what is happening in the image you have chosen. (Visualization) Think about the clues the author has given you in the illustration, title, and caption. What do you think is happening now? What events happened before and after this image? Try to think about several different ideas that may fit. Record your ideas. Be prepared to discuss with classmates.*

Teacher Note: There are four pictures that students can choose from. You may choose to limit the options. Use the title and caption for each picture. Students will be asked to brainstorm story ideas - ideas can be recorded based on the teacher's discretion. Encourage students to start by generating *many* ideas (Fluency) and then to start expanding on the ideas they like the most (Elaboration). Suggestion: 3 consecutive sticky notes; one each for beginning, middle and end. (Story maps, graphic organizers, etc. can also be used.)

 **Look For**

- Students who generate unique or abstract ideas. (Creative)
- Students who think of multiple ideas for one picture. (Creative)
- Students who make connections between the image and their own experiences. (Perceptive)



- Students who look for details in the image and/or caption that others may not notice. (Strategic)

Explain

If possible, group students according to the image they chose. Students will discuss their plan with their group using their sticky notes or other graphic organizer.

Questions:

- Which ideas are the most unusual or unexpected? (Originality)
- What do you notice about the characters and events in the story ideas? What else might you add to the ideas to provide more detail? (Elaboration)
- What is similar and different between everyone's ideas? Are there ways that some of the different story ideas might be combined? (Flexibility)



Look For

- Students who can clearly explain their ideas about what they notice. (Communicative)
- Students who make connections between characters and events related to one another. (Perceptive)
- Students who make connections between their ideas and others in their group and/or students who make associations with other texts/resources. (Perceptive)
- Students who give specific feedback and support to classmates in an effort to extend their thinking. (Strategic/Communicative)

E Elaborate/Extend

Target Task

Students will be given time to write their stories based on their previous knowledge of story structure and what they have brainstormed about their image and sequence of events.

Teacher Note: Students will need writing notebooks/Chromebooks or whatever means you are currently using for recording student writing.

Extend the Task

For students who demonstrated some of the high-potential behaviors earlier in the lesson or in prior work, consider one or more of the following adjustments at this point in the lesson.



- Have partners or groups read over their story and then read another author’s interpretation from *The Chronicles of Harris Burdick: Fourteen Amazing Authors Tell the Tale*. Students then discuss:
 - Who is the narrator in the author’s story? Is your story being told in the same perspective or point of view as the author’s? (Point of View)
 - What do you notice is the same and different between your writing and the author’s story? (FFOE)
 - What is unique about the author’s story? (FFOE)
- Have students edit their work by focusing on **Standard 3.3b**: *Use dialogue and descriptions and actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.*



Scaffold and Support

For students who may be struggling to get started, a graphic organizer can be provided to aid in the planning process. For those students who are having trouble with sequencing events, they can also record their own storytelling so that they can listen to their thought process and revise their thoughts prior to writing.



Look For

- Students who are open to and use constructive feedback from others. (Strategic and Resourceful)
- Students who use real experiences in their writing. (Perceptive)
- Students who have descriptive details in their writing. (Communicative)
- Students who are “thinking outside of the box” for their writing. (Creative)
- Students who are using already taught strategies in narrative writing. (Resourceful)
- Students who are making purposeful word choices with their writing. (Perceptive)

Evaluate

Have students reconvene, and remind them that we are focusing on how stories tend to go. All stories include character(s), a setting, a problem and solution. They should be written in a way that makes it easy for readers to understand.

Have students partner up and share their story with a partner. Students can consider the questions below with their partner ahead of the group discussion.

Then have a few students share their stories out loud to the class. Engage in a class discussion about the different stories that were shared using the questions below.

Questions for discussion:

- Did these stories have a beginning, middle, end? Narrator?
- Did the events go in order?
- What was unique about everyone's story?
- Which of your classmates' ideas would you use? Why?
- What did you learn about story writing and sequencing of events?

Teacher Note: Make note of which students may need additional support or extension activities moving forward.

"The Mysteries of Harris Burdick" Graphic Organizer	
Title of my Picture	
Setting Where does the story take place?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Character(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <hr/> ● <hr/> ● <hr/>
Beginning (Introduction) What event leads up to the heart or problem in the story?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Middle (Heart of the Story) What is the heart of your story? What is the main event? What is the problem?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
End (Solution/Conclusion) How does the story end? What is the solution? Did the character(s) learn a lesson?	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>