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Build Strong Writers

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Dave Wisniewski
Katarina Hempstead



Roy Thomas

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#35

100% Story Writing™

**Dave Wisniewski
Katarina Hempstead**



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Skill:	Writing
Ages:	Grades 3-6

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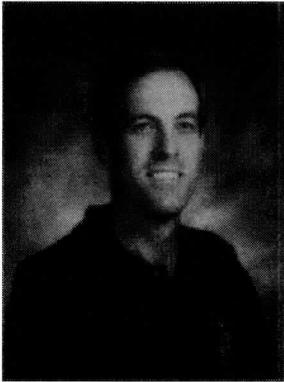
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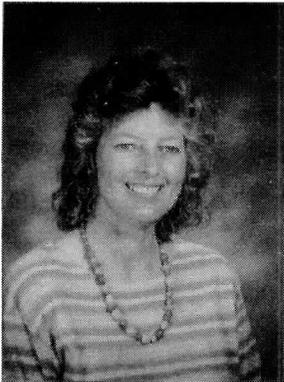
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Dave Wisniewski is a language arts teacher in Camp Verde, Arizona. During his 21 years as a classroom teacher, which has included experience at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, Dave has developed a variety of middle school language arts and mathematics programs, all of which he currently employs in his classroom. He also conducts in-service presentations dealing with the implementation of writing instruction programs and totally writing-based language arts programs at the middle school level. Dave was recognized for his superior instructional record by being named 1995 Teacher of the Year for Yavapai County, Arizona. He is also an avid bicyclist and in the past 22 years has pedaled over 100,000 miles, including three transcontinental bike trips across the U.S. Dave is also the author of the *100% Writing Series* (which includes separate volumes for Persuasion, Exposition, and Narration).



Katarina Hempstead

Katarina Hempstead is a humanities teacher at the Camp Verde Middle School in Camp Verde, Arizona. With more than 20 years of teaching experience to her credit, Katarina is comfortable teaching at any level (1st through 8th grades). She is a 1991-92 Gold Star Award winner for teaching excellence as sponsored by Eagle Communications in the State of Montana. Katarina has had the opportunity to work in many classroom situations around the country from three-room school houses to large, unified systems. One of her goals has been to someday write children's stories, and teaming with Dave Wisniewski on this project has enabled her to attain this goal on a larger scale. When she's not busy sightseeing or working on her computer, you can find her on the golf course near her home. *100% Story Writing* is Katarina's first publication with LinguiSystems.

January 1997

Dedication

To Lenny and Marc for letting me be who I am, and to Dave Wisniewski for believing
I could WRITE — Katarina

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Introduction

Background

100% Story Writing is a writing resource intended primarily for use in grades 3 through 6. It has been designed specifically to be a lead-in resource to the *100% Writing* series, which is a more rigorous, structured program of formal writing instruction intended for middle school grades.

Application of the Material

This resource is intended primarily for use in helping younger students to develop a healthy interest in writing and to foster basic writing skills. To achieve that goal, it makes use of high-interest personal experience narratives and narrative exercises that call upon the student to assume various identities. You are encouraged to use a wide latitude in adapting the topics in this book to your existing language arts program in any manner that makes sense. This resource, while encouraging both a focus on one particular style of writing and an emphasis on several basic skill areas which are key to later writing success, is not intended to be a writing instruction program. Rather, it is hoped that the use of this resource will encourage students to freely use their imaginations and to resist the inclination to impose limitations upon themselves and their writing efforts.

Adaptation By Grade Level

Because of the great difference that exists in student ability and understanding at the 3-6 grade

levels, it is important for you to successfully adapt this material as required. While every effort has been made to find an appropriate “middle ground” with regard to the readability of set-up passages and the wording of questions used in individual exercises, the wide disparity that exists between the average beginning third grader and the average ending sixth grader obviously dictates that you consider the best way to modify the material to insure student understanding. In this regard, these suggestions might be useful:

1. The older and more capable the student, the less likely the need for modification of any kind. Fifth and sixth grade students should be fully capable of understanding both set-up passages and questioning. With minimal introduction from you, the student should be capable of thinking through the sequencing of the story, planning it, and writing it, especially after several experiences with using the materials.
2. Younger and less-capable students, such as third graders, will probably require greater help from you in understanding the material. Teachers at this level should consider modifications such as whole-class or directed reading of the set-up passages, walking the class through the questions to arrive at appropriate answers, or even arriving at group consensus on answers.
3. Since many of the set-up readings are written from a personal experience or historical standpoint, you may consider adopting the identity of the narrator in such exercises and present the set-up material orally to the students. Presenting the material orally may be

particularly helpful in the case of the younger or less-capable student who may have difficulty accepting or understanding the point of view used in the passages.

Focus Elements

Instructors using this resource as a lead-in to the *100% Writing* middle school program will want to concentrate on three specific focus areas:

1. Spelling

It is our belief that one of the keys to successful writing is correct, accurate spelling, and that the sooner students understand the need for accurate spelling, the better. For this reason, students are encouraged in each **Let's Write About It** component to spell correctly and to use a dictionary or to seek assistance if they encounter difficulties. We do not endorse inventive spelling at the 3-6 grade levels.

2. Sentence Structure

We believe that students should be expected to use properly structured, properly punctuated sentences in all instances. This includes proper use of capital letters, end marks, and the comma as it applies to items in a simple series. Sentences do not need to be elaborate or complicated at this level. A knowledge of correct, simple sentence structure needs to be a goal for every student exiting fifth or sixth grades.

3. Three-Part Story Structure

We strongly endorse the concept of a three-part story structure at this elementary level. Your students should understand that a clearly-written story is composed of a beginning, a middle, and an ending. We do not believe that length, in and of itself, should be an issue, and that it is actually counterproductive to ever impose a length requirement on any piece of student writing. We also believe it is important at this time to impress upon young writers the concept of a story

being a meaningful, pre-planned sequence of events.

Topic Elements

Each of the 50 writing topics in *100% Story Writing* is divided into the following elements:

1. Let's Read About It

Whether used as an individually read, directed, whole-class, or teacher-read passage, the purpose of this element is to provide background material for the writing assignment. In some cases the passage provides historical information about the topic. In other cases it is a first-person narrative delivered by the author. In all instances, the passage serves to establish the situation, to build student interest, and to focus the student's attention on the topic.

2. Let's Think About It

This element helps the student to sequence story events correctly and allows him to develop specific details for the story by asking several series of direct questions about things a good writer might ponder before beginning to write. These questions may be handled on an individual basis by more-capable students, or they may be used to fuel small-group or whole-class discussions with less-capable students. The question headings are also useful in helping students block their sentences into individual paragraphs. (See **Teacher Suggestions** on pages 9-33 for paragraphing tips for each topic.)

3. Let's See It Happen

This is an optional element of the writing sequence that can be useful for highly visual students or for students who have the tendency to form clearer ideas through drawing. Included with this resource are three different storyboard masters (found on pages 147-149) which can be reproduced for drawing purposes.

Your students can use the storyboards to draw their depictions of individual scenes from their stories. These illustrations can often be helpful in providing a concrete reference for students and can aid them in recognizing details and sequencing events properly.

4. **Let's Write About It**

This final element provides some subtle reminders of things students should concentrate on when writing their stories. Among these are the need for prior thought, three-part structure, correct spelling, and correct sentence structure and punctuation.

In addition to the instructor and student materials in *100% Story Writing*, you'll also find examples of student stories generated from the topics in the book. Beginning on page 135, there are six student stories – including two which were constructed using the storyboard masters. These student writing examples represent a range of age and ability levels (which reflect a variety of lengths and levels of complexity), and we hope their inclusion will help you better plan and implement this program.

Good luck using these materials to build stronger, more confident, successful writers.

Dave and Katarina

Topic Checklist

- | | |
|--|--|
| _____ 1. The Race | _____ 26. Absolutely Amazing Annie |
| _____ 2. The Tennis Ball | _____ 27. The Lost Pet |
| _____ 3. The Troll | _____ 28. The Day I Flew |
| _____ 4. The Snowman | _____ 29. The Shortcut |
| _____ 5. Canine Cowboy | _____ 30. Dog Daze |
| _____ 6. Through the Floor | _____ 31. The Amusement Park |
| _____ 7. The Gloves | _____ 32. The Cave |
| _____ 8. Help! I'm Stuck in (Name
the Game) | _____ 33. The Raft |
| _____ 9. The Mighty Oak Tree | _____ 34. The Tree House |
| _____ 10. The Great White Shark | _____ 35. The Web |
| _____ 11. The Fun House | _____ 36. A Knight in Shining Armor |
| _____ 12. Seven-Hand Sam | _____ 37. Humpty Dumpty's Fall |
| _____ 13. The Locomotive | _____ 38. The House Builder |
| _____ 14. The Sea of Grass | _____ 39. Lost in a Labyrinth |
| _____ 15. The Sled Ride | _____ 40. The Dream Vehicle |
| _____ 16. The Falling Rock | _____ 41. The Underwater City |
| _____ 17. The Magic Lens | _____ 42. A Special Day |
| _____ 18. The Water Slide | _____ 43. The Picnic |
| _____ 19. Through a Lion's Eyes | _____ 44. Over the Rainbow |
| _____ 20. The Treasure Map | _____ 45. It Came From Beneath the Bed |
| _____ 21. The Magic Trick | _____ 46. The Kingdom in the Clouds |
| _____ 22. Wash Day | _____ 47. The Neverending Elevator |
| _____ 23. The Toy Store | _____ 48. The Gooch |
| _____ 24. I Help Officer (Name) | _____ 49. The Baby-sitter |
| _____ 25. The Rescue | _____ 50. The Waterfall |



Teacher Suggestions

Story #1: The Race

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Initiate a conversation with the class about the subject of races in general. Be sure your students understand all the elements involved in a race that they may overlook (starting gun, race lanes, starting gate, finish line/tape, awards, etc.).
2. Try to elicit suggestions from the class about other kinds of races (both usual and unusual) not specifically addressed in the reading passage. Make a list of these kinds of races on the board.
3. Discuss ways in which townspeople might commemorate special events from a town's history. Use the students' own community, if applicable. You should ultimately try to steer the discussion to a type of race as a way to commemorate an event in a town's history.

4. Paragraphing Suggestions

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| Beginning | 1. Before the Race |
| Middle | 2. At the Starting Line |
| | 3. The Race |
| Ending | 4. The Finish |

Story #2: The Tennis Ball

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Pose the question to the class of what it might feel like to be in a very tight, enclosed space. Ask the students about claustrophobic conditions they may have personally experienced. Follow this with a question about what it ultimately feels like to escape these situations and be set free. (The freedom or liberation angle is key to this story.)
2. Ask the class what escaping from an enclosed space might be like if the situation were compounded, i.e., the environment is totally dark and nothing can be seen. What is it like to instantly go from total darkness to total brightness?
3. Be certain that your students have some knowledge of the game of tennis. You may want to discuss the way the game is played, the object of the game, and what equipment is required to play the game. Introduce appropriate vocabulary specific to tennis (court, net, racquet, volley, etc.).

4. Paragraphing Suggestions

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Beginning | 1. Out of the Can |
| Middle | 2. The Serve
3. The Volley |
| Ending | 4. Back in the Can |

Story #3: The Troll

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Be sure the class is familiar with the story of "The Three Billy Goats Gruff."
2. Familiarize the class with the concept of a troll. They should realize that trolls are characters of Norwegian folktales who habitually inhabited forests, caves, and clefts in rocks. Trolls were unfriendly to people and were responsible for the minerals of the earth.
3. As a whole class activity, assemble a class composite of what the ideal troll would look like. "Creating" a troll may help students who are having difficulty visualizing such a character to do so. Any available pictures of trolls from storybooks or other fantasy resources would also aid students in their descriptive efforts.
4. Paragraphing Suggestions

Beginning	1. The Problem
Middle	2. The Bridge 3. The Troll
Ending	4. Solving the Problem

Story #4: The Snowman

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. The concept of winter, snow, and change of seasons must be understood. Students in some parts of the country may have difficulty grasping the concept of a radical change in seasons because they have never experienced it.
2. The process of building a snowman must be understood in sequence. Again, some students may have absolutely no experience with building a snowman. Draw upon the experiences of veteran snowman-builders in the class (yourself included) and make a list of the procedure and the subtleties that the students may have a tendency to overlook, such as

rolling the snow to keep it perfectly round, picking the perfect spot to place the snowman, and choosing appropriate “accessories” to finish it off.

3. Initiate some conversation about the melting process. How would a snowman melt throughout the course of a warm day? The process can be easily observed by creating a mini-snowman in class out of shaved ice. Does it melt from top-to-bottom? Outside-in?
4. Paragraphing Suggestions

Beginning	1. The Four Friends
Middle	2. Coming Alive
Ending	3. Your Day of Life

Story #5: Canine Cowboy

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Conduct a discussion about frightening or vicious animals. Have individual students share their experiences about animals in their neighborhoods they fear and why. Have them tell about their confrontations with these animals.
2. Paragraphing Suggestions

Beginning	1. The Beast/The Place
Middle	2. The Meeting/The Mounting
	3. The Ride
Ending	4. And the Winner Is?

Story #6: Through the Floor

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Initiate a discussion about the types of dwellings people live in around the world. Allow students the opportunity to verbalize what they know about these various living arrangements. Make a list of living arrangements your students suggest on the chalkboard to point out the wide array of dwellings people call home.
2. Find out how many students in your class live in or have lived in apartments, particularly high-rise apartments. Allow these students the opportunity to explain what living in a high-rise is like. If you have any students who have lived in apartments and single-family dwellings, you might want to allow them the opportunity to share their observations on the merits and demerits of each.

3. Paragraphing Suggestions
 - Beginning** 1. Your Apartment/The Floor
 - Middle** 2. Falling
 - Ending** 3. Landing

Story #7: The Gloves

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Ask your students if they have ever found any objects around their homes that were unusual. Allow the opportunity for sharing. Ask where these objects were found.
2. Explain the idea of an attic. In this day and age, many students have not had exposure to this former household mainstay (or cellars or crawlspaces). If you have any students with attics in their homes, allow them the opportunity to explain their experiences with attics. What is it like to be in an attic?
3. Paragraphing Suggestions
 - Beginning** 1. Your House/Your Friend
 - Middle** 2. Your Exploration/The Attic
3. The Gloves
 - Ending** 4. What to Do?

Story #8: Help! I'm Stuck in (Name the Game)

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Conduct a class survey. Find out what games students consider their favorites. Make a list on the chalkboard. Determine whether the class prefers board games, video games, outdoor participation games, etc.
2. Once you've made a list of favorite games, allow students to voice their opinions on why the games they listed are their favorites. Why do some prefer the kinds of games they do? Allow some discussion on why certain kinds of people prefer certain kinds of games.
3. Paragraphing Suggestions
 - Beginning** 1. The Game
 - Middle** 2. The Journey
 - Ending** 3. The Finish

Story #9: The Mighty Oak Tree

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Initiate a class discussion and determine whether anyone in the class has a fear of heights. If anyone does, allow these people to relate situations they may have encountered pertaining to this fear (buildings, bridges, roads, cliffs, etc.).
2. Determine if you have any seasoned tree climbers in your class. Poll these self-proclaimed experts to determine if there is a proper way to scale a tree. Allow them to share their tree-climbing strategies. Allow them also to share any problems associated with tree-climbing, particularly when climbing large trees.
3. Paragraphing Suggestions
 - Beginning** 1. The Problem/The Oak Tree
 - Middle** 2. The Climb Up
3. The Climb Down
 - Ending** 4. The Ground

Story #10: The Great White Shark

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Any exposure you can give your students to the world under the sea would be very helpful in setting up this writing. It might be wise to either watch a video or have books available on sea life and sea creatures to provide the proper background and focus. Work with the students to draw a contrast between our world and the world beneath the sea.
2. Students will need to have some familiarity with the great white shark. Have your students share their knowledge of this creature. Provide some photographs of great white sharks to help students with their descriptive efforts.
3. Paragraphing Suggestions
 - Beginning** 1. The Boss/Your World/Your Home
 - Middle** 2. Your Swim
 - Ending** 3. Your Return

Story #11: The Fun House

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Institute a discussion about carnivals/fairs. Most if not all students will have experience with them. Allow them to share their carnival/fair stories.
2. Be sure that the students understand that carnivals/fairs are usually composed of distinct elements (rides, midway, exhibits, food areas, etc.).
3. Steer the discussion to rides students particularly like or dislike, and allow them to give some explanations of their opinions. Zero in on rides that are particularly scary to your students. Find out if there are any rides your students would not go on. See if there is any consensus ride that they would shy away from.
4. Be sure that your students understand what a fun house is and what it is intended for. If you have any hardy souls who have experience with fun house travel, allow them to tell the others what their trip through the fun house was like.

5. Paragraphing Suggestions

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| Beginning | 1. The Fun House |
| Middle | 2. Your Turn |
| | 3. In We Go! |
| Ending | 4. Out We Come! |

Story #12: Seven-Hand Sam

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Talk about chores that your students typically have to do around their homes. See what kind of list you can compose from the students' suggestions.
2. Ask your students if they enjoy doing chores. Do they understand the need for them? Do they know why it is good to have to do chores?
3. Ask if anyone in the class has ever been in the situation where the need to do chores has interfered with some activity they were planning. Allow sharing time. How did it make them feel to have to give up their plans to do chores? Was there a way they could have gotten around the problem?

4. Paragraphing Suggestions

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| Beginning | 1. Your Problem |
| Middle | 2. The Creature |
| | 3. Doing the Chores |
| Ending | 4. Mission Accomplished |

Story #13: The Locomotive

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Discuss the concept of strength. When your students think of strong things, what do they think of? Urge your students to look beyond physical strength to a broader definition which might include structures, like bridges or other mechanical and material types of strength. Make a listing.
2. Discuss the subject of trains. Allow for shared experience with train travel.
3. Some explanation of diesel locomotives may be required. You might research and point out relative facts about these machines to the class. For example, diesel locomotives are capable of generating power equivalent to that of 6,000 horses; they rarely use more than a small part of their full power when traveling along flat track; diesel engines only generate electric current to power onboard electric motors, and it is these motors that drive the wheels; and so on.
4. Paragraphing Suggestions

Beginning	1. The Locomotive/The Journey
Middle	2. The Hill
Ending	3. The Summit

Story #14: The Sea of Grass

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Have a discussion about places the students have been where vision is not restricted.
2. Discuss what constitutes a "sea." How many different kinds of "seas" can the students brainstorm? Remember to remove the restriction of a sea being composed only of water (including such concepts as "seas of people" or "seas of sand").
3. Since the wagon train/covered wagon idea is a part of this story, you may need to familiarize the class with the way pioneers moved across the country in the mid- to late-19th century.
4. Paragraphing Suggestions

Beginning	1. Your Trip
Middle	2. The Sea of Grass
Ending	3. Your Exploration

Story #15: The Sled Ride

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Students in parts of the country familiar with winter will have little trouble with this exercise. Students from balmer climates afflicted with “sledding illiteracy” (like computer illiteracy, but carrying a far greater stigma) may require instruction on sledding basics. You may want to actually bring in several sleds and discuss their parts. Demonstrate or allow the children to demonstrate different ways of riding a sled.
2. Paragraphing Suggestions
 - Beginning** 1. The Day/The Hill/The Sled
 - Middle** 2. The Ride/The Bump
 - Ending** 3. The Finish

Story #16: The Falling Rock

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. The discussion of choice here would be one which involves being held “captive” – wanting to do something or to go somewhere but not being able to do so due to physical restraint or lack of ability. Allow students to share experiences they may have had being held captive or to think of times they may have felt powerless to do something they really wanted to do.
2. Paragraphing Suggestions
 - Beginning** 1. The Setting
 - Middle** 2. The Dream/The Plan
3. The Trip to the Valley
 - Ending** 4. Afterthoughts on the Journey

Story #17: The Magic Lens

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Students should have at least a rudimentary understanding of a microscope. If possible, provide some hands-on microscope time to better help in setting up this piece of writing. Some good magnifying glasses would serve the same purpose if microscopes are unavailable.

2. Discuss the optical science involved so that the class understands what happens when glass lenses are bent, curved, and combined.
3. Pick some everyday objects and ask students what they think they would see if they were actually able to get inside these objects and see things too small for their eyes alone to see.
4. Paragraphing Suggestions

Beginning	1. The Discovery
Middle	2. The Plan
Ending	3. After the Fun

Story #18: The Water Slide

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Encourage students to share their water park experiences. Gradually steer the discussion from water activities in general to water slides, and then to big water slides. Of course, you will want to allow time for any daredevils to tell of their adventures on water slides of a more “formidable” nature.
2. As a visualization aid, you may want to require students to either draw or construct a model of the ultimate water slide (which they can then transpose to their stories) either as an individual or a group project.
3. Paragraphing Suggestions

Beginning	1. The Kid/The Beast
Middle	2. The Climb
	3. The Slide Down
Ending	4. The Finish

Story #19: Through a Lion's Eyes

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Take a poll to determine how many students have ever visited a zoo. Find out how many of them have ever been to a city zoo. Where? What was it like?
2. Ask your students to choose and justify one animal they would like to be if they had to be any single animal living in a zoo. Allow response time.

3. Challenge the class to make a list contrasting life in a zoo with life in the animal's native habitat. How do the two living arrangements differ? Which one would the animals prefer?
4. Paragraphing Suggestions
 - Beginning** 1. You
 - Middle** 2. Wake Up
 3. A Day in the Zoo
 - Ending** 4. The Day Ends

Story #20: The Treasure Map

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. An ideal way to introduce this assignment is to conduct your own treasure hunt. Hide an innocuous object (a key, for example) somewhere on the school grounds. Devise a map for students to follow, but not one so blatantly simple that it gives away the location of the object. You might throw a few curves into the mix with some cryptic wording to spice things up. For example, you might write "Beyond the great green wall of writing (chalkboard), North to the drawered test trove (file cabinet)."
2. As an alternative to the above exercise you might break the class into teams of 4-5 students each and have each team hide an object and devise its own treasure map. Groups can then simply switch maps and hunt away.
3. Paragraphing Suggestions
 - Beginning** 1. The Treasure Map
 - Middle** 2. Getting Ready
 3. The Hunt
 - Ending** 4. The Moment

Story #21: The Magic Trick

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Initiate a discussion about magic and magicians. Allow students to share experiences they may have had while attending magic shows or seeing magicians on TV.
2. Allow some theories to be advanced about the ways magic tricks work. Find out what some of the students' favorite magic tricks are and if they understand just how the tricks work.

3. Ask your students to consider what the ultimate magic trick might be. If your students could design a magic trick that no one had ever seen before or that no one had ever performed, what would that trick be? Allow time for thought and discussion. What would be required to perform this ultimate trick?
4. Paragraphing Suggestions

Beginning	1. The Performer
Middle	2. The Act
Ending	3. The Big Trick

Story #22: Wash Day

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Through open discussion, find out which students have ever had a truly special article of clothing. Allow some time for discussion about what these clothing articles are/were and what makes/made them so special.
2. Ask the students to share what it felt like when these pieces of clothing were no longer usable or had to be given away or discarded (because they were outgrown, worn out, etc.).
3. Find out if your students have ever had any articles of clothing that they were so proud of or so happy to have that they didn't want to take them off once they had them on. Allow sharing time.
4. Paragraphing Suggestions

Beginning	1. The Kid
Middle	2. Wash and Dry
Ending	3. After the Wash

Story #23: The Toy Store

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Initiate a discussion about toy stores. What makes toy stores fun? What's the best toy store your students have ever been in?
2. Ask your students what they think they would do if they were allowed to be in a toy store alone for an hour and they could do anything they wanted for that hour. How would your students choose to fill their time alone in the toy store?

3. Ask your students what they think it would be like to be alone in a toy store all night. Would it in any way be different from being there alone during the day? How and why?
4. Ask your students to advance some theories of what might happen in a toy store at night. They should be encouraged to use their imaginations.
5. Paragraphing Suggestions
 - Beginning** 1. How It Happened
 - Middle** 2. When the Lights Go Out
 - Ending** 3. Getting Out

Story #24: I Help Officer (Name)

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Initiate some discussion about occupations. Make a list of the occupations your students think are difficult ones. Allow time for some reasoning as to why these occupations are judged to be difficult.
2. Next, discuss what your students consider to be “important” jobs. Conduct an impromptu class vote and find out what your students believe to be among the most important jobs that people do. See where being a police officer fares. See if it appears in both lists. (It probably will – if it doesn’t, suggest that it be included and offer some rationale.)
3. Discuss why police officers are necessary, why their jobs are difficult, and why their jobs are important.
4. Allow the students to share any interactions they may have had with police officers (of the helping nature), or allow them time to suggest ways they believe youngsters could actually be of help to a police officer.
5. Paragraphing Suggestions
 - Beginning** 1. The Officer
 - Middle** 2. The Problem
 - Ending** 3. The Solution

Story #25: The Rescue

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Ask your students to share what they know about castles. Give them some background about specific purposes for castles and the parts which compose them. Teach all specific vocabulary necessary. What would be good or bad about living in a castle?
2. Why might someone be held prisoner in a castle? What might it be like to be a prisoner in a castle?
3. What might be hard about rescuing someone who was a castle prisoner? What would have to be accomplished to make the rescue successful?
4. Paragraphing Suggestions

Beginning	1. The Prison and the Prisoner
Middle	2. The Plan
	3. The Attack
Ending	4. The Retreat

Story #26: Absolutely Amazing Annie

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Initiate a discussion with the class about visitors. Allow the students to share their experiences with people who have come to their homes (relatives and friends).
2. Ask the class if anyone has ever had anyone really different come to visit them (different, in this case, might apply to visitors with different customs, habits, those who speak different languages, etc.). Allow for sharing of these instances.
3. Draw the discussion over to a connection between visiting and gift-giving. For instance, it's customary to leave a token of appreciation when one visits another for any length of time. See if your students can come up with a few examples of gifts that might be appropriate as tokens of appreciation.
4. Paragraphing Suggestions

Beginning	1. The Relative
Middle	2. The Gift
	3. The Discovery
Ending	4. A Friend for Life?

Story #27: The Lost Pet

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Nearly every student in your class will probably have or has had a pet of one sort or another. Conduct a class survey to discover the following things about your students and their pets: How many students own a pet? How many come from “multiple pet” homes? What kinds of pets do your students own? What is the most popular pet?
2. Find out if any of your students have ever lost a pet. Allow for time to relate these experiences.
3. Ask your students to consider what it would be like to be a lost pet (a lizard lost in a bedroom outside the confines of its cage, a dog lost in the forest, a parakeet lost in a large building, etc.). Make a list of all the ways this pet might feel being lost.
4. Paragraphing Suggestions
 1. You
 2. Your Owners
 3. How Did it Happen?
 4. Knowing You’re Lost
 5. Traveling Home
 6. Getting Back

Story #28: The Day I Flew

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Initiate a discussion about people and flying. Find out how many of your students have ever flown and in what ways.
2. Make a list of all the different ways people have been able to fly (airplane, rocket, hang glider, sailplane, etc.). Be sure to point out that all forms of human flight are assisted – something else in the way of propulsion or mechanization is required.
3. Ask the students to consider how they might be able to fly with the least amount of outside assistance possible. This would be an ideal time to show some clips from a video on the history of flight, which almost always contain segments of many early, bizarre attempts to get off the ground.

4. Paragraphing Suggestions

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Beginning | 1. The Idea |
| | 2. The Equipment |
| Middle | 3. The Place |
| | 4. The Flight |
| Ending | 5. Thinking About It |

Story #29: The Shortcut

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. The discussion for the day is about shortcuts. Have your students tell about shortcuts they frequently use and why they use them.
2. Ask your students if there are any shortcuts they know of that they would like to use but have not. What is the reason?
3. Discuss the ways shortcuts can be both good and bad.

4. Paragraphing Suggestions

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Beginning | 1. The Decision |
| Middle | 2. The Shortcut |
| Ending | 3. Back on Course |

Story #30: Dog Daze

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. All students who have dogs as pets should be enlisted to provide help in this exercise. Discuss strange habits that dogs have. Allow your dog-owning students to share some of the silly things that their dogs routinely do.
2. Find out if your students' dogs ever go off on their own, out of sight, for any extended periods of time. See if any of the students have theories about where their dogs may go and what they may do when they aren't being watched.
3. Paragraphing Suggestions

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Beginning | 1. Sneaking Around |
| Middle | 2. The Truth |
| | 3. Back to Bed |
| Ending | 4. The Next Morning |

Story #31: The Amusement Park

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Allow some time for discussion about amusement parks. Also, let your students share their experiences with visits to local and state fairs. Pay particular attention to those students who have visited large theme parks such as those mentioned in the **Let's Read About It** section.
2. Find out what your students liked best about the parks they have visited. Encourage them to offer some rationale for their choices.
3. In similar manner, find out what your students liked least about the parks they have visited. Challenge them to think of ways to change the elements they didn't like to make them better (e.g., if long lines are a problem, how could such a problem be addressed?).
4. You might want to have your students sketch out a master plan of their own amusement parks before writing. Another avenue might be to have the entire class work together to cooperatively design what students believe to be the perfect amusement park. This planning can also be done in small groups.
5. Paragraphing Suggestions
 - Beginning** 1. The Plan
 - Middle** 2. Building Your Amusement Park
 - Ending** 3. Consider Your Creation

Story #32: The Cave

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Initiate a group discussion about caves and cave exploration. Allow students to share their experiences with caves.
2. If there are any caves in the immediate vicinity of your school, a field trip to one of these would make a perfect lead-in to this assignment. If actual caves are not available, show students books and photographs which will give them some idea of what the interior of a cave looks like.
3. Paragraphing Suggestions
 - Beginning** 1. The Discovery
 - Middle** 2. The Cave Journey
 - Ending** 3. Exiting the Cave

Story #33: The Raft

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Younger students may need to be familiarized with the story "Huckleberry Finn."
2. Allow students to share their experiences with rafting. On the elementary side, most students will probably have experience with swimming pool rafts and some may have gone down water slides on tubes (a form of rafting). Others perhaps may have been lucky enough to take a river trip on large rafts with commercial operations. Discuss the different kinds of rafting experiences people can have.
3. Paragraphing Suggestions

Beginning	1. The Raft-Building Plan
Middle	2. The River Trip
Ending	3. Back on Shore

Story #34: The Tree House

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Find out how many of your students have or have ever built a tree house. Ask them to share specifics about their tree houses. What are they used for? Who is allowed inside? How were they built? What are they like inside?
2. Make a list on the board of those attributes the class believes would characterize the "perfect" tree house.
3. Paragraphing Suggestions

Beginning	1. The Building Plan
Middle	2. Building the Tree House
Ending	3. The Final Product

Story #35: The Web

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Conduct a discussion about spiders and the webs they build. An examination of the environs around your school should yield a variety of spider webs. Search these out with the class and allow students to examine the webs.

2. Locate a film or video about spiders and allow the class to watch how spiders construct their webs. Observing web construction will give students an appreciation of the many different kinds of webs spiders employ.
3. Challenge the students to design a web pattern for a good spider web and let them explain their reasoning behind their designs.
4. Paragraphing Suggestions
 - Beginning** 1. The Announcement
 - Middle** 2. The Plan
 - Ending** 3. The Winner

Story #36: A Knight in Shining Armor

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Since the focus of this writing is on knights, your students will need to understand what a knight was and what he stood for. Discuss the education, training, and service of a knight, as well as what knighthood represented. Many of your students may only have a cursory understanding of knights from fairy tales and similar sources, which often present a convoluted picture of what a knight actually was.
2. Discuss dragons and be sure that your students understand that they are mythical creatures.
3. Make some lists of qualities your students would look for in an ideal knight and an ideal dragon. Who would they expect to win in a contest between the two? Why?
4. Paragraphing Suggestions
 - Beginning** 1. The Challenge
 - Middle** 2. The Quest
 - Ending** 3. The Return Home

Story #37: Humpty Dumpty's Fall

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Other than making sure your students know the story of Humpty Dumpty (no longer a matter of mere assumption in this day and age), the assignment is fairly self-explanatory and requires little set up.

2. Paragraphing Suggestions

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Beginning | 1. The Fall |
| Middle | 2. The Discovery
3. The Repair Job |
| Ending | 4. Success |

Story #38: The House Builder

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Review the story of “The Three Little Pigs” and see if your students understand the point that the story attempts to make (i.e., it pays to do the job right the first time).
2. Discuss the ways modern houses are made. Bring into play the variety of materials and methods that people use in constructing houses.
3. Find out if the students understand what kinds of factors have to be guarded against in constructing a house properly. Consider the elements, the longevity of the materials, and other such factors.
4. Paragraphing Suggestions

Beginning	1. The Improvements
Middle	2. The Test
Ending	3. You’re in Business!

Story #39: Lost in a Labyrinth

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Students will need to gain some understanding of mazes. All have no doubt done paper mazes, and you might want to have them do a few such mazes to introduce the concept of a three-dimensional maze (otherwise known as a *labyrinth*).
2. A good second step is to have the students, in pairs, build a straw maze by cutting straws to various lengths and gluing them down to a piece of heavy paper to form simple mazes. By blindfolding other students in the class, the blindfolded students can demonstrate their ability to learn by being timed as they gently use their fingers or a pencil end to negotiate the maze.

3. Your students may enjoy actually watching a mouse negotiate a maze. You can build a wooden maze fairly quickly by using scrap lumber obtained inexpensively at the local lumber yard. Running a mouse through a maze does a better job of cementing the concept of the three-dimensional maze because students can project themselves into the role of the mouse as they watch its efforts.
4. Paragraphing Suggestions
 - Beginning** 1. The Maze
 - Middle** 2. Traveling Through the Maze
 - Ending** 3. The Exit

Story #40: The Dream Vehicle

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Allow your students whose families have cars to discuss the types of cars they own. Find out if there is a certain type of vehicle (not necessarily model) most families tend to use (pick-up truck, minivan, etc.).
2. Find out what kinds of vehicles your students would like for their parents to own. Why? What makes the vehicles students suggest so special?
3. Ask your students to consider what the attributes of the ideal vehicle for family use would be. If they could build their own cars, what would they entail? You might want to record these attributes on the chalkboard or possibly have your students draw or clay model such a vehicle.
4. Paragraphing Suggestions
 - Beginning** 1. The Plan
 - Middle** 2. The Design
 - Ending** 3. The Test

Story #41: The Underwater City

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Find out what your students know about underwater exploration. How are people able to survive underwater for any length of time? Discuss the equipment needed and the risks associated with being underwater for any length of time.

2. You will need to explain the concept of water pressure, which could be a completely foreign concept to most of your students. Simply comparing weights of a glass of water and a bucket of water will prove the point that water has weight, and that the more of it you have above you, the more it weighs on your body.
3. Initiate a discussion of how it might be possible to actually live under the water. Do your students believe living underwater could ever be possible? Challenge them to think of reasons people might *want* or *need* to think about living under the surface of the ocean. What problems can your students envision with trying to live underwater? Can your students think of solutions to these problems?
4. Paragraphing Suggestions
 - Beginning** 1. The Assignment
 - Middle** 2. The Visit
 - Ending** 3. Back on Top

Story #42: A Special Day

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. As a prelude to this lesson, it would probably be helpful to pose the question which appears in the writing assignment to the entire class (*Have you ever wished that you could spend a very special day with someone?*). Under three category headings on the chalkboard (*friend, relative, famous person*), have the students volunteer suggestions as to who they would choose to spend the day with in each category. Their selections will be of particular value in the third category, since students often tend to limit their thinking in the area of famous people to only current celebrities. Encourage them to consider historical figures and people from ancient history as well.
2. Paragraphing Suggestions
 - Beginning** 1. The Choices
 - Middle** 2. The Day's Plan's
 - Ending** 3. Looking Back at the Day

Story #43: The Picnic

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Allow for some sharing on the subject of picnics. Find out what experiences your students have had with going on picnics.
2. Discuss the specifics of picnics. What do your students consider the best kinds of places to take picnics? Why? What materials are essential to have along on picnics? Why?
3. Discuss some of the things that can ruin picnics (the weather, insects, forgotten items, etc.).
4. Paragraphing Suggestions

Beginning	1. The Place
Middle	2. The Plan
Ending	3. Home at Last

Story #44: Over the Rainbow

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Conduct a discussion of rainbows. Find out what your students know about them. Discuss the myths commonly associated with rainbows.
2. Discuss the science behind rainbows. Teach your students what rainbows really are, how they are formed, and why they appear after rainstorms. You may want to show your class that rainbows can be produced any time by producing one in the classroom (a book of classroom science experiments will help you create a rainbow).
3. Paragraphing Suggestions

Beginning	1. Up To the Rainbow
Middle	2. On the Surface
Ending	3. The Return

Story #45: It Came From Beneath the Bed

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Conduct a discussion about the many different kinds of fears that people suffer from (fear of flying, heights, enclosed spaces, crowds, etc.). Allow your children to share some of their own fears.

2. Discuss superstitions. See how many commonly-held superstitions your students are aware of. Talk about the difference between a superstition and a real fear.
3. See if any of your students are willing to share the fact that they have fears when going to bed at night. You may have to break the ice with one of your own fears (surely you had some when you were a child).
4. Paragraphing Suggestions

Beginning	1. Bedtime
Middle	2. The Noise
Ending	3. The Peek

Story #46: The Kingdom in the Clouds

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. Ask your students to share any stories or fairy tales they personally know that involve royalty (kings, queens, princes, etc.).
2. Point out that one thing all these royal figures had in common was that they each had a *kingdom*. Ask your students to explain, if they can, what a kingdom is. What specifically do you need for your kingdom to be prosperous and successful? (Apply the term in a broader sense than land under the control of an actual king, otherwise your discussion will go nowhere. Steer your students in the direction of considering that a kingdom needs a strong, fair, leader; skilled and hard-working people; and good resources, such as fertile soil, appropriate weather, etc.)
3. See if any of your students have ever been in a cloud. Some may relate flying experiences, but few will probably think of fog as a cloud.
4. Discuss the possibilities of having a kingdom in the clouds. Since clouds can't really bear weight, how could students use their imaginations to create a way for a kingdom to stay aloft in the clouds?
4. Paragraphing Suggestions

Beginning	1. The Kingdom
Middle	2. The Problem
	3. The Plan
Ending	4. Success?

Story #47: The Neverending Elevator

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. For this story to be successful, your students need to have a clear concept of how an elevator works. If understanding how an elevator works is a problem, consider building a simple model elevator with ropes and pulleys to drive the point home.
2. Ask students to share their elevator experiences. Some may find the experience daunting because their vision is obscured and they can't see where the elevator is going. Others might find the movements an elevator makes pleasurable.
3. Paragraphing Suggestions

Beginning	1. The Choice
Middle	2. Going Up! 3. Heading Back
Ending	3. Down at Last!

Story #48: The Gooch

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. To set up this assignment, conduct a short lesson on the relationships between word sound and meaning. Alert your students to the fact that certain words sound a great deal like what they mean (*buzz*, *hiss*, etc.). This type of "sound word" is called *onomatopoeia*, and it is something your students might not have thought about before. Challenge them to think of onomatopoeic words. Make a list.
2. Pose the word in question for this assignment – *gooch*. What attributes can your students ascribe to that word? What does its sound make them think of?
3. Paragraphing Suggestions

Beginning	1. The Package
Middle	2. The Gooch
Ending	3. The Thank-you

Story #49: The Baby-sitter

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. A brief discussion of baby-sitters and the problems they encounter is in order to begin the set-up. Older students might have actual baby-sitting experience already and may be able to add a measure of practicality to the discussion.
2. Challenge your students to imagine what would be the **worst** thing about being a baby-sitter. What would be the **best** thing about baby-sitting?
3. Paragraphing Suggestions
 - Beginning** 1. "Trouble"
 - Middle** 2. The "Trouble" in Trouble
 - Ending** 3. A Job Well Done

Story #50: The Waterfall

Pre-Reading Discussion

1. A video or film on waterfalls would be a good way to introduce the writing assignment. Depending upon where your students live geographically, contact and experience with actual waterfalls of any significant size may be minimal or non-existent. If you have any nearby waterfalls and can get to them easily, encourage your students to visit them.
2. Paragraphing Suggestions
 - Beginning** 1. The Hike
 - Middle** 2. The Waterfall
 - Ending** 3. Success





Let's Read About It

What do you think about when someone says, "Let's have a race?" Do you immediately imagine you and your friends charging across the lawn or along the sidewalk to be the first to get to a particular place? Do you imagine bicycles zipping down the street or wagons flying down a hill? To many people, the word "race" brings to mind pictures of fast cars zooming around a track or motorcycles hurtling through the air as they soar off big dirt hills. If you recognize these kinds of races, then you know what we mean by "normal" races.

The truth is, people will race almost anything. Long ago it was very popular to race bullfrogs, and some people still do it. The object of such a race is to make your frog reach the finish line first by crawling along behind it and slapping the ground so that he will take big jumps. People also frequently race things that normally don't move, like beds and bathtubs, by adding wheels to them. Usually these strange races are held as a part of a special occasion, like a town birthday or other celebration. Strange races such as these are meant to provide fun and to make people laugh.

A strange race takes place in the story you are going to write. This is the story of a weird race that takes place in your town once a year to help the townspeople remember a special event in the town's history. The race is always held on your town's main street, which needs to be cleared of people and traffic so that there is plenty of room for the race to take place. But this is no ordinary race. There are no cars or motorcycles in this race. There aren't even any beds or bullfrogs. This is the day the **elephants** race down the main street of your town, and everyone from far and wide has come to see them run.

Now that you know something about the race and a little about the racers, tell me the whole story of the race in writing. You can be an elephant in the race, or an elephant jockey, or you can just be someone watching the race. Whoever you decide to be in this story, do a good job telling what this strange race is like.

Let's Think About It

A. Before the Race

1. What is it like on the main street of your town? What kind of excitement is going on?
2. What does the street look like? What special changes have been made to get the street ready for the elephant race?
3. What kinds of people have come to watch the race?
4. What is the reason the race is being held? Does it help the people of your town remember or celebrate something that happened long ago? Is it just for fun?

B. At the Starting Line

1. How many elephants are in the race? Do they all look alike? How are they different?
2. How do the elephant jockeys ride these elephants? How are they able to stay on them?
3. Who gets to race the elephants? Why do these people get to do this?
4. Where do the elephants begin the race? Where do they have to race to?
5. How do the elephants get to the starting line?

Story Topic 1: **The Race**, *continued*

C. The Race

1. What is the signal to start the race?
2. How does the crowd react once the race begins?
3. What happens during the race? Do all the elephants run straight down the race course? Does anything strange or funny happen while the elephants are racing?
4. What kinds of sounds or smells might someone watching the race experience?

D. The Finish

1. Which elephant wins the race? How does it win? Was the race a close race or a runaway?
2. What did the winners get for winning this race? What did the winning rider get? How about the winning elephant?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story, it may help you to actually draw some pictures of the things that happened during the elephant race. If you think this might help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers to do your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in your pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about everything that is going to happen in this elephant race, write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words that you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

A can of bright green tennis balls once stood on a shelf in a department store. Inside the can three tennis balls were held prisoner. They were packed into this can so tightly that they were completely helpless and unable to move. Day after day they sat motionless, pressed one against the other inside their airless metal prison, just waiting for something to happen. Weeks passed by, then months, and the three tennis balls were beginning to think they were going to be stuck inside that dark, musty can forever. And then one day, out of nowhere, something happened.

At first, the tennis balls didn't know what to think. Suddenly they were being lifted through the air. Then, almost before they knew it, their whole world was turned upside down with a huge crash. They could feel themselves moving across the ground, turning this way and that. Then they were lifted into the air once more and whisked quickly across something that made a strange beeping noise. Next they were rudely thrown into something that rustled quite a bit and seemed to be very crowded. Finally, they went for an extremely bumpy ride in a rumbling machine. Then everything became very quiet once more.

Suddenly a huge scraping sound was heard coming from the top of their can. A great bright light appeared overhead, and a gust of cold air rushed inside, chilling the three tennis balls down to their skins. Then, almost before they even had a chance to figure out what was happening to them, the three tennis balls were tumbling toward the ground.

As you might have already guessed, the reason for the tennis balls' unexpected journey was that they had been purchased by someone wishing to play tennis. They are now about to begin an even more adventurous journey, however – the journey for which they were made. The lid has been taken off their can and they have been dumped onto the tennis court.

In this story you are going to be one of the tennis balls that has just been released from the can after weeks and weeks of sitting on the shelf in the department store. You will write a story about what it's like to be out of the can at last, and what it's like to be a tennis ball in a tennis match.

Let's Think About It

A. Out of the Can

1. What is it like to be out of your can after having spent so much time in it? Is it a relief? Is it frightening?
2. Which of the three tennis balls is you? Do the three of you have names?
3. Do the three of you have anything to say to each other after you are dumped out onto the court?
4. What does your new world outside the can look like? What kinds of things do you now see?

Story Topic 2: The Tennis Ball, *continued*

B. The Serve

1. The first thing that might happen to you is that you will be served by the tennis player. What did this tennis player look like to you from way down there on the court?
2. What did it feel like to be picked up by a hand?
3. Describe what it was like to be tossed into the air. Did you see things that you could not see from on the court? What did it feel like to be floating in the air before you were served?
4. When you are hit by the racquet, what does it feel like? Does it hurt? Are you strong enough to take it? Now that you know what is taking place, does all this hitting and soaring through the air change the way you feel about being out of your can?

C. The Volley

1. What is it like to be hit back and forth across the net, hitting the players' racquets and bouncing off the court? Do you find this an enjoyable experience? What kinds of things are you seeing or hearing as all this is going on?
2. What does it feel like to finally have been used for the purpose for which you were made?
3. What do you think about as you are put back in the can? Are things going to be different now that you are a "used" tennis ball?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story about the tennis match, it may help you to actually draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think this might help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers to do your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in your pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about everything that is going to happen to the tennis ball, write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words that you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Do you recall the story of the three billy goats Gruff? In this story, three billy goats longed to cross a bridge to reach some tasty grass. If you remember correctly, they had a little problem to deal with before they were able to start munching – a nasty troll who lived under the bridge. Remember how the troll thought that the bridge was his and refused to let the billy goats cross? In the end the billy goats were able to outsmart the wicked troll because he got too greedy for his own good. That's the part of the story everyone knows. Not many people know what happened after that.

You see, after the troll had been thoroughly embarrassed by the billy goats, he was all washed up as a troll. Everyone in the area knew how easily he could be fooled, so they all started to take advantage of his slow thinking. One night while everyone was asleep, he packed his bags and hightailed it out of town. He hoped he could find a new place with a bridge where folks hadn't heard of his embarrassing experience with the billy goats.

Well, guess what? You know that footbridge that you and your friends have to cross on your way to school? Guess who decided to live under it? That's right, it's that troll. For the past several days he has been giving your friends a hard time. He's been generally mean and nasty, telling your friends he plans on having them for dinner and things of that sort. Your friends have become very frightened of the troll, and they're now afraid to cross the bridge. They have decided to send you to deal with the troll.

In this story you will write about your meeting with the troll and what happens when you try to convince him to stop bothering your friends. Remember, the troll is not very smart. Maybe if you can think of a way to trick him, you can embarrass him, just like the three billy goats Gruff did.

Let's Think About It

A. The Problem

1. Why won't the troll let your friends cross the bridge? Why is this a problem?
2. What kinds of things has he said or done to your friends?
3. Why did your friends think that you could take care of this problem?

B. The Bridge

1. What kind of bridge is the troll guarding?
2. What does the bridge look like and what is it made of?
3. Where is the bridge and where does the troll live?

C. The Troll

1. What does this troll look like? Most people have never seen a troll. Is he wearing anything?
2. What does he smell like?

Story Topic 3: The Troll *continued*

3. When the troll talks, what does his voice sound like?
4. If you were to touch the troll, what would he feel like?

D. Solving the Problem

1. What did you do to find the troll? Were you alone?
2. What did you say to him to convince him to leave your friends alone? Did you trick him? Did you promise him anything?
3. How did the troll respond? Is he going to do what you ask? Is he going to stay? Why or why not?
4. If the troll leaves, where will he go?

Let's See It Happen

Before you begin writing your story about this troll and your conversation with him, it may help you to actually draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think this might help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about everything that is going to happen between you and the troll, write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words that you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

One winter day, four young friends went outside to build a snowman. Their neighborhood had received a fresh blanket of snow the previous night, and they were sure that this would be their last chance to build a man of snow before the arrival of spring. Warmer days had already begun to visit the neighborhood. Winter's icy grip was giving way to warm breezes and thawing ice on ponds and lakes. The sudden overnight snowfall had been unexpected, and it provided just the right kind of sticky, wet snow needed to roll huge snowballs. The friends decided that this would be the final snowman for the winter, so it had to be like no other snowman they had ever built.

They began their work with great enthusiasm. First, they selected a clear spot in the yard, slightly up on a hill. They chose this spot so that when the snowman was finished it could easily be seen by everyone in the neighborhood. Next, they began the job of rolling the great bottom snowball that would be the snowman's feet and legs. The sticky, white snow was so wet that in no time they had the huge snowball right where they wanted it. Then they rolled a slightly smaller ball to be the snowman's trunk. Even though this snowball was smaller than the first, it was still very heavy, and it took all four of the friends working together to lift it into position. After that, two of the friends rolled a smaller snowball for the head and put it in place while the other two worked to pack handful after handful of snow into the areas where the balls touched each other. The snowman was beginning to take shape.

Finally, all that was left to be done was to dress the snowman; to put those things on him that would make him "come alive" and make him look like a proper snowman should. Each of the four friends ran home to collect some neat stuff and then met back at their snowman to put the finishing touches on him. When they were done, they stepped back from their hard work and looked at what they had created. They all had to agree that this surely was the best snowman the neighborhood had ever seen. They had done their job well.

Now, normally, this would be the end of your average snowman story. The next day the friends would go back to school, the warm breezes of early spring would again blow, and the snowman would slowly melt all alone on the hill, already forgotten by the youngsters who had built him. But this is not your average snowman story, because when the four friends built this snowman, something quite unusual happened. You see, the youngsters did such a good job building their snowman that during the night when the cold winter winds still blew, this snowman magically found the ability to see, to think, and to feel. Maybe it was special snow that fell. Maybe it was the way the four friends dressed him. Maybe it was where they built him. Whatever the reason, the four friends never really knew just how special their special snowman was. And they never would know, for by the time they returned from school the next day, he was gone, nothing more than a melted pile of snow and a heap of old clothing.

Now here's where you come in. In this story you get to be that special snowman. It's your job to tell the story of how you came to be able to see, think and feel, and what it was like to slowly melt away the following day in the warm winds of early spring.

Let's Think About It

A. The Four Friends

1. Who were the children who built you? What were their names?
2. If you are wearing clothing, what kind is it?
3. What else is there besides clothing that makes up your outfit? Are you holding anything?

B. Coming Alive

1. When was it that you first knew that you were able to see, think, and feel?
2. What was it that made it possible for you to come alive? What was the reason this happened?
3. What did it feel like to suddenly be alive?
4. Do you know what the reason was that you were able to come alive?

C. Your Day of Life

1. What did you get to see happen during the day as you stood on the hill?
2. What did it feel like as the sun came up in the morning?
3. What did it feel like as the cold night winds turned in to the warm winds of day?
4. How did you know you were melting? What did it feel like to melt?
5. What was the last thing you experienced before you turned into a puddle of water?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story about life as a snowman, it may help you to actually draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think this might help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers to do your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in your pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about everything that is going to happen to you as a snowman, write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words that you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

In every town there is one animal that every kid is afraid of. Ever since kids have been around there have always been big, mean, ferocious animals lurking behind tall wooden fences and hiding behind cars and trees. They wait for some poor, sweet kid (like you or me) to ride her bike by on the way home from school, and then they run out from behind their fences and trees and growl and snarl and chase the poor kid all the way down the street.

You probably have an animal just like this in your neighborhood, and chances are very good that this animal is a dog. Am I right? If you're like me, you probably have to walk right by where this dog lives on your way to school, or you have to pass by his house on your way to ball practice or whenever you walk to the store or to see a friend. If you've ever been chased by a big, mean, nasty dog like this, you probably ran faster than you ever thought you could to get away from him.

Did you ever wonder what it would be like if you could be brave enough to not run away? Did you ever wonder what it would be like to show this nasty pooch who the real boss is? How would you do such a thing?

This story is about just such a time. In the story, you are going to pretend that you have a showdown with this big, mean dog. You are tired of having to run away, and you are tired of being chased. Today is the day you have decided not to be afraid anymore. And how are you going to show him who the boss is? That's easy! You're going to jump right up on his back and ride him until he gives up and becomes a friendly pooch. And he's going to take you on the ride of your life!

Let's Think About It

A. The Beast

1. What does this dog look like? What breed of dog is he?
2. What makes this dog so mean? What stories do the other kids tell about him?

B. The Place

1. Describe the place where this dog lives? In what part of town does the dog live?
2. Why do you need to go by this place?

C. The Meeting

1. When the dog runs out to chase you as usual, what do you do that you don't normally do? What did this feel like?
2. Were you scared? If so, what did this fright do to your body?

D. The Mounting

1. What did the dog do when you jumped on his back? What was his reaction?
2. What did it feel like to sit on this dog? Was it what you imagined it would feel like?
3. How did you hold on to the dog? What did you grab on to?

Story Topic 5: Canine Cowboy, *continued*

E. And the Winner Is?

1. How long does the ride last?
2. Who wins? Does the dog throw you off? Or do you wear the dog out? Or do you both wear each other out?
3. What happens to the dog after he's been ridden? Did your plan work? Has he changed in any way?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story about riding the big, mean mutt, it may help you to actually draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think this might help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers to do your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about everything that is going to happen on this ride, write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words that you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

What kind of building do you and your family live in? Very often the kinds of buildings people live in depend upon where they live. For instance, if you live outside a big city, chances are very good that you live in a single-family home – a home that's yours and yours alone. Or you might live in something called a townhouse or duplex. These are houses that are attached to one another. If you live in the country, you might live on a farm. If you do, then you have all the room to play and move around that you want. If you live in a big city, however, you might live in an apartment building. These buildings are often very tall. Each family or several families may live on different floors, one above the other. By living this way it is possible to fit many people into very little space. This is important because there is not much space to build houses in big cities. So, instead of building outward, people build upward.

Imagine what it would be like to live in an apartment building that is very tall, with other people living above you and below you. Think of what it might look like if you could look straight down through the floor into the next apartment, and the one below that, and the one below that, all the way to the ground. Wow! That would probably be one scary sight! Now imagine what it would be like if you fell through your floor and the one below that, and the one below that, all the way down to the ground. That would be quite a trip! And that's the trip you are going to take in this story.

In writing your story, you will pretend that you live in an apartment building. One day after school, you hit a weak spot in your floor and fall through. You will tumble through all the other apartments below yours until you reach the ground. You will describe all that you see and feel along the way. There's just one rule – you are not allowed to get hurt along the way. When the trip is over, you are safe and sound. How that is able to happen is up to you.

Let's Think About It

A. Your Apartment

1. In what city do you live?
2. How tall is your apartment building? Does it have a name?
3. What floor do you live on?

B. The Floor

1. What room were you in when the floor broke?
2. What were you doing when the floor broke?
3. How did you first know the floor was going to break? What did you see, feel or hear when this happened?

C. Falling

1. How many different apartments are you going to fall through? Who owns or lives in these apartments?
2. As you fell through each apartment, what did you see? What were the people in each doing as you passed through?

Story Topic 6: Through the Floor, *continued*

3. What reactions did these people show when they saw you passing by?
4. Did you crash right through every floor on the way down? Or did you have a chance to stop for a second or two before the next floor broke?
5. What kinds of objects made the journey with you?

D. Landing

1. Where did you finally come to stop?
2. Why did you finally stop?
3. What did you see as you looked up through all the holes that you had made?
4. How were you able to do all this without getting hurt?
5. What did you do when this adventure was all over?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write the story of your incredible trip through the floor of your apartment, it may help you to actually draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think this might help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers to do your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in your pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about everything that is going to happen on your journey, write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words that you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

When was the last time you were playing and you found something really unusual? Has this sort of thing ever happened to you? If you live near a forested area it is sometimes possible to find some strange old things covered over by weeds and bushes. Very often these strange and interesting finds turn out to be items left or discarded by people who passed through the area long ago.

Perhaps you have moved recently and are now living in a new house. Perhaps your new house is actually a very old house that has been around for years and years. Houses like these can almost be like treasure chests. Because they have been around for so long and because so many different families have lived in them over the years, there's no telling what you might find as you explore all the house's little nooks and crannies. Think about it. Old houses have attics and basements and usually also have lots of small closets that are dark and creepy. When you decide to explore these hidden places in a house, some truly amazing things can turn up, even things that you might have a hard time explaining.

That's exactly what is going to happen in this story. Pretend that you have recently moved into a house that has stood for many years. One day you and one of your friends are playing in your house, and you find a door that leads upstairs to a large attic. You decide to enter the attic to investigate. Inside you find all kinds of neat stuff. It's like finding a buried treasure because only you and your friend know that these things are in the house. One of the things you find is a mysterious pair of gloves. These gloves really don't look like ordinary gloves, and there's a reason for this. When you put these gloves on, something truly special happens. What could it be?

Let's Think About It

A. Your House

1. Describe your house. What does it look like?
2. Is your new house different from the place you used to live? In what way?
3. Where is your new house located?
4. Why did you move to this house?
5. What do you like or dislike about this house?

B. Your Friend

1. Who is this person? Where does this person live?
2. How did the two of you meet or become friends?

C. Your Exploration

1. Why are you exploring the house?
2. What have you explored already?
3. What were you doing when you found the door to the attic?

Story Topic 7: The Gloves, *continued*

D. The Attic

1. Describe what the attic looks like when you open the door. What kinds of things do you find inside?
2. Where do you find the gloves in the attic? Are they hidden or in plain sight?
3. What does it feel like to be in this attic? What does the attic smell like?

E. The Gloves

1. What does this pair of mysterious gloves look like? What are they made of?
2. How do the gloves feel when you put them on?
3. What happens to you when you try the gloves on? What does their power allow you to do?

F. What To Do?

1. Now that you have found these gloves, how do you plan to use them?
2. Do you want others to know about the gloves, or will they be a secret between you and your friend? Why did you decide to let others know about the gloves or keep them a secret?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write the story of the strange and mysterious gloves, it may help you to actually draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers to do your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in your pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about the gloves and what you will do with them, write your story about them. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

What's your favorite game to play? What kind of a game is it? Some kids like to play games that involve sports. They enjoy being on a team and competing against other kids, or they like being able to be outside in the fresh air. Other kids like to play video games. They enjoy overcoming obstacles or reaching a certain level of skill through many hours of practice. Still other kids may prefer the quiet fun of a board game that involves two or three family members or friends sitting around a table or in front of a TV set, trying to be the first to roll the dice and cross the finish line. No doubt you have played such games before in your own home.

If you're a quiet type of person, you probably have a favorite board game. If you like more action and making quick decisions, you probably have one video game that you like best.

Did you ever wonder what it might be like to actually be *in* your favorite video game as one of the characters? Or what it would be like to actually *be* one of the board pieces from your favorite board game? Imagine having to make the journey through the game all by yourself, from start to finish. You'd be sure to meet some interesting characters, and you'd certainly have to do some interesting things to make it safely to the end of the game.

In the story that you will write, you get to be a character in your favorite game. You will need to use your imagination and pretend that you are really on the video screen or game board. All the characters, whether good or bad, will come to life. All the things that happen in the game, good or bad, will be happening to you. Your job is to write about what happens to you as you journey from the start of the game to the finish. Have fun! And good luck on your journey!

Let's Think About It

A. The Game

1. What game do you choose to be in? Why?
2. What do you have to do to win this game? Explain this well, because the person who reads your story might not know how to play this game.
3. Who are you in this game? Do you have a name? What do you look like?
4. Is there anyone else making this journey with you? Who is it? What does he or she look like? Why is it important for this character to be with you?

B. The Journey

1. What is it like to be in this game?
2. What do the things around you look like? What kind of a world is it?
3. What problems do you run into along the way?
4. What do you do to deal with these problems?
5. Do you run into any interesting people or creatures along the way? Describe them. What do they have to do with the game?

Story Topic 8: Help! I'm Stuck in (Name the Game), *continued*

C. The Finish

1. What does it feel like to win the game?
2. What kind of shape are you in at the end of the game? Was the journey like you imagined it would be? Why or why not?
3. What do you do now that you have won the game?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write the story about being stuck inside your favorite game, it may help you to actually draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers to do your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in your pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about what game you are stuck in and how you will travel through it, write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Do you like to climb things? When I was little, I grew up in a house that had a big, giant oak tree in the backyard. It was much taller than our two-story house. It stood right in the middle of the backyard and, even though our yard was big, the branches of the oak tree stretched out so far that they brushed against the side of the house. The trunk was so big my dad couldn't even wrap his arms around it. We guessed the oak tree was well over a hundred years old. In the summertime when it had its leaves, it would shade our entire yard. I loved that oak tree and looked upon it as a good friend . . . unless I had to climb it.

As a kid, I used to climb my oak tree all the time. But I never went farther than the first two sets of branches. As long as I could see the ground, I still felt safe. But once I got past the first two sets of branches, I always began to feel scared and unsteady. The branches beneath would keep me from seeing the ground, and the branches above just kept getting thinner and thinner. The higher I would go the more wobbly the branches would be. I imagined that if I ever got to the top of the tree the branches would be as thin as broom handles, and I would be so shaky that I would never be able to enjoy the view anyway. As it turned out, I never made it to the top because I was always too scared.

In this story you will pretend that you have an oak tree just like mine. Something has become stuck in the top branches, the ones that are as thin as broom handles. This thing that is stuck is so important that you have to climb to the top to get it, even though you may be scared like I was. Your story will be all about what it is like to climb to the top of that tree.

By the way, now that I'm grown up, guess what I do to earn a living? I wash windows on the outside of skyscrapers in Phoenix, Arizona. Can you believe it? I hope you enjoy your climb.

Let's Think About It

A. The Problem

1. What object has become stuck in the top of the oak tree?
2. How did this object get stuck up there?

B. The Oak Tree

1. What does the oak tree look like? Describe it.
2. Where is the tree?
3. What time of year is it? Does the tree have its leaves?

C. The Climb Up

1. How hard is it to reach the first set of branches? What do you have to do to reach them?
2. Where do you do your climbing? Do you stay near the tree's trunk? Or do you climb the branches away from the trunk? Why?
3. How do you begin to feel as you go higher?
4. What do you see when you look down? Up?
5. What did you have to do to get the object that was stuck?

Story Topic 8: The Mighty Oak, *continued*

D. The Climb Down

1. Is this harder than going up? You now have an object to hold onto. How do you do it?

E. The Ground

1. What does it feel like to be back on the ground when your climb is over?
2. Would you ever do this again? Why or why not?

Let's See It Happen

Before you begin writing about climbing the tree, it may help you to actually draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers to do your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have thought about what is stuck in the top of the oak tree and about how you are going to get it down, write the story. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

We usually don't think much about it, but on our planet Earth there are really two very different worlds. One world is the world of the land. This world is a world of brightness. In it we find mountains and deserts, forests and rivers. It is a world of cars and factories, people and machines. In our world of air and sunshine, people make the rules. We have charge over the world of the land and all the animals that live on the land. We are all very familiar with the world we live in and how it works.

But there is another world that most people know very little about. This other world is the world of the sea. This is a world of darkness that few people ever get to explore. It is very different from the world in which we live. There are no machines, buildings, or people. There is no air, and all the creatures live by one very simple rule – the strongest creature gets to be the boss. In the dark world of the sea, this creature is the great white shark.

In the story that you will write, you are going to be a great white shark. The deep, dark sea is your world. You are the boss and you get to make all the rules that all the other sea creatures must follow. In your writing you are going to take us on a tour of your underwater kingdom as you go for a swim.

Let's Think About It

A. The Boss

1. Tell us about yourself. What do you look like? How big are you?
2. What kind of boss are you? How do you treat your subjects?

B. Your World

1. Describe what your underwater world looks like. What kinds of things would we find if we went there?

C. Your Home

1. Where do you live in this world? What does your home look like?
2. Do you have things in your home that the other creatures do not? What are these things?

D. Your Swim

1. Where do you go when you swim through your kingdom?
2. What kinds of creatures do you meet?
3. What do they do when they see you?
4. What happens while you are swimming around? Do you solve any problems that your subjects may be having?
5. Do you have any helpers with you? What kinds of creatures are they and why are they with you?

E. Your Return

1. When your swim is over, where do you go? Do you return home? What do you do then?

Let's See It Happen

Before you begin writing about your swim through your underwater kingdom, it may help you to actually draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers to do your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have thought about all that you will see and do on your swim, it's time to write your story. Be sure your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Have you ever been to a carnival? Does the carnival ever pass through your town? When I was growing up, a big carnival came through our town every year in the late summer. My friends and I used to look forward to this yearly visit. To us, the carnival meant the chance to do lots of neat things that we never got a chance to do at other times of the year.

First of all, there was the carnival food. There were so many different things to eat, it was always a difficult task to decide what to buy. Usually I ended up with a huge stomachache because deciding was so difficult. It was easier to just eat a little bit of everything (or a lot of everything).

Then there was the midway, the area of the carnival where all the games of chance and skill are located. I remember how I used to save my allowance for several months so that I could play all the games – games with darts and balls and spinning wheels and rings to toss on milk bottles. Every once in a while I even managed to get lucky and win a big prize.

But, without a doubt, the things I look forward to most were the carnival rides. Carnival rides are a blast! I always tried to ride every ride at the carnival. I had my favorites, just like you probably have your favorite rides. I loved the roller coaster and the Ferris wheel. No ride at the carnival was too fast or went too high. In fact, the higher and the faster a ride was, the better I liked it. There was no ride at the carnival that frightened me . . . except the Fun House.

Have you ever been in a fun house at a carnival? When I was a kid, the Fun House was a dark and creepy place with ghosts and goblins and monsters lurking around every corner. Riding through the Fun House was like riding on a very slow roller coaster, except it was totally dark. Every time you turned a corner or went through a door, some frightening “thing” would jump out at you and scare the beejeebers out of you. Although I know now that nothing in the Fun House could have hurt me in any way, back then a ride through its dark tunnels seemed like a trip that would never end.

In this story, you are going to pretend that you are at a carnival. Your friends have talked you into taking a ride through the Fun House. You agree to do it, even though the idea scares you. Your job is to write about what it is like to take this frightening ride, and to describe the things you see inside that are so scary.

Let's Think About It

A. The Fun House

1. What does the Fun House look like from the outside? What can you see?
2. How are other people acting who come out of the Fun House?
3. Who is going to take the ride with you? Whose idea was the ride?
4. Why does this ride scare you?

Story Topic 11: The Fun House, *continued*

B. Your Turn

1. What are you thinking about as you wait in line?
2. What do you feel inside as you hand your ticket over?
3. What do you sit in to take this ride? What is it like?
4. As you get ready to go into the Fun House, what do you see?

C. In We Go!

1. What happens to you as your car starts to move?
2. How do things change as you go into the Fun House? Can you see anything? Is there anything you can smell, feel, or hear?
3. How are your friends acting?
4. What kinds of things happen along the way through the Fun House? What kinds of scary things are inside?

D. Out We Come!

1. How did it feel to be done with this ride?
2. Were you or your friends in any way different after the ride was over?
3. What did you do when they let you out of your car?
4. Would you take this ride again? Why or why not?

Let's See It Happen

Before you begin writing about your hair-raising trip through the Fun House, it may help you to actually draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers to do your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have thought about what you might see, feel, and experience inside the Fun House, you are ready to write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Chores, chores, chores! Do you have chores that your mom and dad require you to do around the house, like washing dishes, taking out the trash, or walking and feeding the dog? Most of us have simple chores like these that we do to help out around the house.

Often the place you live determines the kinds of chores you have to do. If you live on a farm, you probably have to deal with chores that most kids would never have a chance to do, because many of your chores would probably deal with crops and animals. If you live in the city, you may be the one your family depends on to run down to the store whenever an item is needed (that was my main chore when I was a kid). It really doesn't matter what kinds of chores you do around your house, one thing is still certain – doing chores takes up valuable play time. Chores always seem to get in the way whenever there's something fun to do, especially that most disgusting of all chores, cleaning up your room.

Wouldn't it be great if there was a way that you could do all your chores at once and have them over and done? That would sure make more play time, wouldn't it? But for that to happen, you'd probably need, say, seven hands or so?

In the story that you will write, you are going to pretend that you and your friend have something really important to do or someplace really important to go. The problem is that your mom has given you a list of chores to perform that's as long as your arm. And she has made it very plain that you will do nothing and go nowhere until this list of chores has been completed. While you are in the middle of doing your chores, at just about the time you think you will never get done, you notice your friend excitedly coming down the street, leading a creature on a leash.

When your friend runs up to you, you cannot believe your eyes. The strange creature he has brought with him is very unusual, like no other creature you have ever seen before. But although you are shocked at the way the creature looks, a smile instantly spreads across your face, because you know at once your problem is solved. Among the other strange features of this creature, you notice that it has exactly seven hands!

Tell the story of how this creature, Seven-Hand Sam, helps you dispose of your chores.

Let's Think About It

A. Your Problem

1. Who is your friend?
2. What have you planned to do or where have you and your friend planned to go?
3. Why is this outing so important?
4. What exactly has your mother left you to do? What are the chores? Describe them.

Story Topic 12: Seven-Hand Sam, *continued*

B. The Creature

1. Describe Seven-Hand Sam. What does he look like? Think about things like color, body shape, and body parts.
2. What makes Sam unique, other than the fact that he has seven hands?
3. Where did your friend get Seven-Hand Sam? Where does he keep him? What does he feed him? How come you didn't know about him before?

C. Doing the Chores

1. How will you get Sam to help you?
2. What materials will Sam need to get the jobs done?
3. Once you turn Sam loose on the chores, how does he get them done?

D. Mission Accomplished

1. What does your mom think when the work is done?
2. How do you explain to her how the work got done faster than expected?
3. Do you tell her about Sam? What becomes of him now that your work is done?
4. Do you get to go on your outing?

Let's See It Happen

Before you begin writing the story of how Seven-Hand Sam came to your rescue, it may help you to actually draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers to do your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have thought about what Seven-Hand Sam can do to help you out of your jam, write the story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

When you think of *strong* and *powerful* things what comes to mind? To some people strength means a weightlifter lifting a heavy weight over his head. When you think of strong animals, you might think of a team of horses pulling a wagon or an elephant moving some large and heavy object, like a tree trunk, with his trunk. We often think of machines, too, when we think of powerful things. Big trucks can pull heavy loads over the highway, and bulldozers can push large amounts of dirt to where it is needed. But maybe the most powerful machine that we have a chance to see on a regular basis is the diesel locomotive.

Did you ever sit in a car or bus at a railroad crossing and listen to a diesel locomotive rumble by? You were probably in a hurry to get somewhere and were anxious for the train to pass by (or at least the driver of the car or bus driver probably was). But if you paid attention as the locomotive passed by, you probably noticed that you could feel the very ground shake as its heavy steel wheels rolled along the rails. Usually these locomotives are pulling dozens and dozens of freight cars loaded with goods. To pull the weight of so many loaded cars, the diesel locomotive stands alone as perhaps the most powerful machine ever invented.

If a diesel locomotive could talk, what might it have to say? It leads a very tough life going here, there, and everywhere. Just when it gets a load to one destination, it turns right around and brings another load back. And what does it get for all its hard work? If it's lucky, it gets a drink of diesel fuel and maybe a washing every now and then. A diesel locomotive works hard and never seems to rest.

In this story you will become a diesel locomotive. You are pulling a heavy load along the tracks, when up ahead you see a long, steep hill looming in the distance. The tracks wind up and around, up and around as they scale the hill. Your job is to explain in words how hard you have to work to pull all the freight cars up and over this hill.

Let's Think About It

A. The Locomotive

1. What do you look like? Do you have a color? A number? A name?
2. What makes you special or different from all the other locomotives that work on the railroad? How old are you?

B. The Journey

1. Where are you going? Why are you going there?
2. How many cars are you pulling? What kinds of things are in the freight cars?
3. What have you seen so far on your journey?

C. The Hill

1. How do you feel when you see the big hill up ahead?
2. What things do you do to get ready to go up the hill?
3. Does the engineer do anything to help you get ready?
4. What happens when you start to climb the hill?
5. What does it feel like to be pulling all these cars uphill? What does their weight and all this effort do to you as the hill keeps going and going?
6. Does the engineer do anything to help you out as you get tired?

D. The Summit

1. How do you feel when you go over the top and your hard work is done?
2. How do you know when you have reached the top? What can you see from way up there?
3. Do you and the engineer celebrate when you reach the summit? How?
4. What will you do now? Is your journey over? Do you have farther to go?

Let's See It Happen

Before you begin writing the story about your experience as a locomotive, it may help you to actually draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers to do your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have thought about what it might be like to work hard as a diesel locomotive, write your story. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Have you ever been to the ocean? If you have, then you know what an amazing sight it is to be able to look across miles and miles of water with no trees or mountains or buildings getting in the way. The ocean is one of the few places where you can look out upon an endless expanse of emptiness and see the sky and water meet in all directions to form a perfect, unbroken horizon. But the ocean isn't the only place where a person can see almost forever. Sometimes when we think of a sea we think only of the vast, blue ocean. We forget that there can be other types of seas that are just as huge.

Think about a thick forest for a moment. A forest is really a sea of trees, isn't it? Or think about a desert. A desert is nothing more than a sea of sand. Both the forest and the desert can stretch on and on in all directions with very little change in scenery. But there is yet another kind of sea that very few of us nowadays can imagine – a sea of grass.

About 150 years ago, much of the central portion of our country was covered with thick grass, not at all like it looks today. This grass was tall and dense, and it often grew as tall as a grown person's waist. Pioneers who were traveling westward in covered wagons had to drive right through this sea of grass. Can you imagine what it would be like to walk through grass as tall as you? Or what it would be like to watch this tall green grass against a bright blue sky as it blows gently in the wind? Sadly, very few areas of this tall grass remain today. Much of it has been cut down over the years to make room for farmland. The great sea of grass that once covered our land and helped the buffalo grow fat is mostly just a memory.

In this story you will pretend that you and your family are pioneers heading west in search of a new home. You are traveling in your covered wagon across the vast sea of deep grass, when you decide to jump down off your wagon and walk through the grass for a while. Your job is to describe what walking through this tall grass is like, as well as to describe any interesting things that may happen within that sea of grass.

Let's Think About It

A. Your Trip

1. Who are you? What year is it?
2. Where are you and your family headed? Why are you going there?
3. What other family members are traveling with you.
4. How long have you been traveling? How much farther do you have to travel before your trip is over?

B. The Sea of Grass

1. What does the sea of grass look like from your wagon seat as you ride slowly through it?
2. Is the countryside flat or hilly?
3. How deep is the grass? What does it look like? What does it smell like? How does it sound as your wagon rolls through it?

Story Topic 14: The Sea of Grass, *continued*

4. What do your wagon and horses look like as they move through the grass?
5. If you were to look behind you, what would you see?

C. Your Exploration

1. Why did you jump off the wagon into the grass?
2. How did the world change when you landed in the grass? What can you see?
3. What does it feel like to be surrounded by so much grass?
4. What was it like to walk through the grass? Was it hard to walk through? Was it a fun thing to do? Was it scary? Why?
5. Once you were on the ground, what did you do? Did you stay fairly close to the wagon? Why? Did you wander away from the wagon? Why?
6. If you did wander away, did you come across anything interesting in the grass?
7. How did you get back to your wagon?

Let's See It Happen

Before you begin writing about your adventure in the sea of grass, it may help you to actually draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think that this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and label what is happening in the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about what it might be like to wander around for a while in a sea of deep grass, write your story. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Winter is a wonderful time of year. When the weather turns cold and the snow flies, we get to do many things that can't be done during any other season. Winter means ice skating and snowball fights, skiing, and sledding. Wherever there are hills packed hard with snow, kids love to go sledding.

Sledding is a form of winter fun that has been around since ancient times. Long ago, kids used to ride sleds that were nothing more than strips of animal skin stretched between smooth strips of wood. After this, the North American Indian tribes used what we call *toboggans* to carry their loads. Toboggans were smooth pieces of birch wood which were curled up at the front to form a hood. Young Indian boys and girls found that these sleds were great for coasting down long, snowy hills, too. About a hundred years ago someone got the idea of putting metal runners under a toboggan. That idea led to the kinds of sleds we often see kids riding today. Of course, we can't forget the saucer-shaped disc, which is another type of sled kids use for coasting down snow-covered hills. These are actually toboggans, too. They just have a different shape. No matter what kinds of sleds kids use, though, they all provide hours of fun on winter days. If you live where snow falls, you probably have a favorite hill for sledding close to your own home.

In this story you are going to write about a sled ride that you take down a very long, steep hill. This can be a hill that you've sledded down before, or you can pretend that it is one you're trying for the first time. For fun, and to make your story more interesting, let's pretend, too, that there's a big BUMP to sled over way down near the bottom of the hill. You will have to go over this bump when you reach the bottom. Have fun on the way down – and hold on tightly when you hit that bump!

Let's Think About It

A. The Day

1. What kind of day is it? Is it windy and cold? Is it bright and sunny? Is the snow falling?
2. What time of day is it? Is this a morning or afternoon sled ride?

B. The Hill

1. Where is the hill you're going to sled down?
2. What does this hill look like from the top?
3. Are you alone? Are there other kids sledding, too?
4. Have you ever sledded down this hill before?
5. How do you feel about sledding down this hill?
6. Can you see the bump way down near the bottom?

Story Topic 15: The Sled Ride, *continued*

C. Your Sled

1. Tell about the sled you're riding. What kind is it? Does it have a certain color, shape, or name? Have you ever ridden it before?

D. The Ride

1. How do you place your body on your sled? Are you sitting? Lying down? Are you on your belly or your back?
2. How do you begin? Do you run and jump on your sled? Does somebody give you a push? Or do you just let the hill make the ride begin?
3. What does it feel like as you begin to coast down the hill? What do you see and hear?
4. Can you steer your sled? How do you steer it? Or are you going to have to go where it wants to take you?

E. The Bump

1. What do you do as you get close to the bump? How do you get ready to go over it?
2. What does it feel like when you hit the bump and get thrown into the air?
3. What happens to you and your sled when you land?

F. The Finish

1. After you have come to a stop, what do you do?

Let's See It Happen

Before you begin writing about your sled ride, it may help you to actually draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think that this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about what your sled ride will be like, write your story. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Once upon a time, a large rock stood in perfect balance at the top of a high mountain. From its lofty spot in the sky it had a supreme view of all that lay around it in every direction. It could see other mountains off in the distance with white caps of snow gleaming in the sunlight. Beneath the rock's feet lay steep slopes covered with thick trees, and grassy meadows with cool, still lakes. Still farther below lay a deep valley, and in this valley was a sleepy town and a mighty river. But these were so far away from the rock that the river seemed to be little more than a narrow silver ribbon, and the houses of the town were but little specks of color at the bottom of a gigantic staircase. All of this the great rock could see from afar. And all he could think about was freeing himself so that he could roll down to the river and the town. He wanted to see these things close up for himself. But, alas, his feet were anchored to the mountain, so there was very little he could do about making his dream come true.

Now you might think that this rock would be very lonely living at the top of a high mountain, but this was not the case at all. This rock had three very kind and caring friends. Their names were Wind, Cloud, and Sun – and, as you might expect, they were the only friends a rock at the top of a high mountain might expect to have, since no one else lived up that high.

Now Wind, Cloud, and Sun were not only good friends to the rock, as I have said, but they were also clever. They could see that the rock was getting very depressed because he could not move across the sky, like Sun did, or blow through the trees like Wind did, or travel back and forth between the valley and the mountaintop, like Cloud did. So they decided to do something about it. They knew that they could not free the rock working alone, but they were sure that if they worked together they could get the job done.

And this is where you come in. If you use your imagination, you can probably figure out what the rock's friends decided to do. In your story, tell about the plan they made to free the rock and how they got the job done. Then, continue with the story of the rock's trip down the mountain.

Let's Think About It

A. The Setting

1. Think about where your story will take place. Think about names. Does the mountain have a name? The valley? The river? The town?
2. If you were this rock, what exactly would your world at the top of the mountain be like? What exactly could you see from where you are?

B. The Dream

1. Why does the rock want to travel to the valley? What does he think he will find there?
2. What exactly makes the rock unhappy with where he is? Has he ever tried to free himself? How? Why did his attempts fail?
3. What kind of a rock is this rock? What does it look like?

Story Topic 16: **The Falling Rock**, *continued*

C. The Plan

1. What kind of plan do Sun, Wind, and Cloud think up to help the rock? What will each of them have to do to make the plan work?
2. Can the three friends make this plan work by themselves? Do they need help from anyone else? Do they need the rock to do anything to help?

D. The Trip to the Valley

1. What happens when the rock first breaks loose?
2. What happens as the rock rolls down the mountainside? What does it experience? There would be many things to see, hear, and feel along the way.
3. Does the rock stop at all along the way? If so, how does it stop? If it does stop, how does it get going again?
4. What happens when the rock reaches the town and the river? What do the townspeople think when this big rock comes rolling into town?
5. Where does the rock come to rest? What do the townspeople do with it?
6. How does the rock feel about what he has found down below? Is he happy with his journey? Was it as he imagined it? Did he find what he was looking for?

E. Afterthoughts on the Journey

1. What happens to the rock after it has looked around? Will it stay in town forever?
2. Does the rock think it will miss its home on the mountainside? Does it decide to go back up the mountain? How will it do this?
3. If the rock decides to stay in the town, what will the rest of its “life” be like? How will the town put this special rock to use?

Let's See It Happen

Before you begin to write about the rock's journey to the valley, it may help you to actually draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think that this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have thought about what the rock will experience on his journey, it's time to write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Have you ever had the chance to use a microscope? Perhaps you have one in your classroom at school, or maybe you've used one in science class. Microscopes can open up a world of wonder because they allow us to see things that are far too tiny to be seen with our eyes alone.

Consider what you might see if you looked at a leaf under a microscope. If you've never done this before, you might want to give it a try. When you look at a leaf with your naked eye, it looks like nothing more than a smooth sea of green crisscrossed by a few random lines. If you were to look at that same leaf under a microscope, however, you would see a much different picture. With the help of a microscope you would discover that the smooth surface of the leaf is actually a sea of tiny, connected parts called *cells*. You would also discover that the faint lines in the leaf look more like a network of canals, and that these actually carry food to the leaf, much like your blood vessels carry blood to your body.

Or think about what you might find if you used a microscope to examine a drop of pond water. To your eye alone this drop would appear lifeless. But if you looked at it under the right kind of microscope, you would soon discover that the lifeless water drop is really alive with more kinds of creatures than you would find in any zoo.

What magic makes it possible to see things so tiny that our eyes alone fail to let us know that they are there? Actually, a microscope is not magic at all. It is just a combination of lenses (smooth, bent pieces of glass) that appear to increase the sizes of these tiny objects so that we become aware of them.

Thinking about the way a microscope works will help you write this story. In it you will pretend that you find a magic lens. This magic lens is not merely a bent piece of glass, but rather a smooth crystal that you happen to stumble upon one day. More important than what this magic lens looks like, however, is what it allows you to do. You will discover, after examining your crystal, that when you hold it up to everyday objects you can see deep inside them. In fact, you can see and discover things about these objects that you never thought possible. And your job is to write about what you discover.

Let's Think About It

A. The Discovery

1. Where were you when you discovered this crystal? What were you doing when you discovered it?
2. Describe this crystal. What does it look like? Feel like? How big is it? How much does it weigh?
3. Was there anything about his crystal that told you it might be special in some way?
4. How did you discover the crystal's magic power? Was it an accident? Did you discover its power as soon as you found it? Did this happen at some later time and place? If so, where and how? What did you see through or in the crystal?

Story Topic 17: The Magic Lens, *continued*

B. The Plan

1. Once you realized what this crystal could do, what did you decide to look at with it? Why did you decide on this particular object or objects? What did you hope to discover? Where do you have to go in order to look at this subject?
2. What exactly do you see when you look at this object with the crystal? What do you discover?
3. Is what you discover something new that no one else knows anything about?
4. Will you tell anyone else about your discovery? If not, why will you keep it a secret?

C. After the Fun

1. What becomes of the crystal when you are through with it? Do you keep it to use another day? If so, what other things do you plan to use it for?
2. If you decide not to keep the crystal, why do you not want it anymore? What do you do with it? Do you give it to someone? Put it somewhere?
3. What kind of experience was discovering and using the crystal?

Let's See It Happen

Before you begin writing about your adventures with the magic lens, it may help you to actually draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think that this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about what the magic lens will allow you to see, write your story. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Once upon a time there was a middle-size town in a middle-size state. The middle-size town had a middle-size water park where all the local kids would gather on hot summer afternoons. They loved to cool themselves off in the water park's middle-size pool and to slide on the park's middle-size slides, which were just long enough and just steep enough to provide the kids with a nice middle-size scare.

The only thing about this water park that was not middle-size was "The Beast." "The Beast" was the biggest, steepest, longest, scariest water slide in the entire water park, or any other entire water park, for that matter. In fact, "The Beast" was such a frightening water slide that none of the kids from the middle-size town had ever worked up enough courage to go down it. Just watching the adults scream their way down its twists and turns was enough to convince the kids that it would be impossible to make it to the end in one piece. On top of this, "The Beast" was so high in the air that most of the kids were even afraid to climb up to the start, let alone try to slide down it.

Then one day one of the kids got brave. It wasn't one of the bigger kids, either. That's right, you guessed it. It was a middle-size kid. She refused to be a coward any longer. While the other kids splashed in the middle-size pool and slid down the middle-size slides, she handed off her towel, tightened the straps on her swimsuit, and headed off for the walkway that led to the top of "The Beast."

Now here's where you come in. Your job is to tell the story of this middle-size kid from the middle-size town at the middle-size water park who dared to be brave. Pretend that you are able to be right there with her as she takes this hair-raising ride down "The Beast."

Let's Think About It

A. The Kid

1. Who is this middle-size kid who dares to be brave? What does she look like?
2. What makes this kid so brave when all the others are so afraid?
3. Why has she suddenly desired to do this?

B. The Beast

1. What does "The Beast" look like? How big is it?
2. What is "The Beast" made of? Just what kind of water slide is it?
3. Why are the kids so afraid of "The Beast"? What kind of reputation does it have? What stories do the kids tell about it?

C. The Climb

1. Describe what it is like for this girl to climb up to the top of "The Beast."
2. What does she feel as she climbs? How does she feel when she reaches the top?
3. What does she see from the top of "The Beast"?

Story Topic 18: The Water Slide, *continued*

D. The Slide Down

1. What happens to this kid as she slides down “The Beast”? Think about what she may see, feel, hear or smell.
2. How do the things around her change as she slides down? Does she use a tube to slide down? Does she use her body only?
3. Does anything scary happen to her on the way down? Anything fun?

E. The Finish

1. How does the slide come to an end? What happens to this girl at the end of the ride?
2. How does she feel now that the ride is over? How does she feel about herself?
3. How do the other kids feel about her after her ride?
4. What do the kids think about “The Beast” now that it has been ridden?

Let's See It Happen

Before you begin writing about the girl's brave slide down “The Beast,” it may actually help you to draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think that this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about what it will be like for the girl in your story to slide down “The Beast,” it's time to write your story. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences, and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Have you ever taken a trip to the zoo? How about to a really good zoo, like one that you might find in a major city? A trip to a good zoo is both a memorable and an educational experience. If it weren't for zoos, very few of us would ever have the chance to view wild animal species close up. A good zoo also takes special care to treat its animals properly. They are fed proper diets, receive proper exercise, and their health is always taken very seriously.

When we pay a visit to the zoo, we generally have a good time. Looking at so many different kinds of animals in one place provides hours of enjoyment. But did you ever consider what the animals in the zoo might be thinking? When you look at a giraffe munching on some leaves, did you ever wonder if he's bored? Or what do monkeys think about as they swing through the trees in their enclosure? Did you ever wonder if they're happy? And what about that elephant that paces up and down behind that wall? Did you ever wonder if he thinks about trying to break that wall down and running away? When the day at the zoo is over, we get to go home and do other things. But what about the zoo animals? Remember, the zoo is not their real home.

In the story you will write, your job is to pretend that you are a lion in the zoo. You will write about what it is like to be a lion in a zoo. You will talk about all the things that you experience, from the time you first wake up in the morning until the time you finally go to sleep at night. To do this, you will actually need to become the lion in your mind, inside your enclosure, and look at a day in the zoo through this lion's eyes.

Let's Think About It

A. You

1. What zoo do you live at? Where did you live before you came to the zoo? How did you end up at the zoo?
2. How do you like being at the zoo? Are you happy or sad to be there? Is it a good or bad place to live? Why?

B. Wake Up

1. How does your day at the zoo begin? Where are you when you wake up? Are you alone, or are there other lions as well? If so, who are they?
2. How would you describe the area you live in? What could you tell your reader about what it looks like? What kinds of things do you have in your area?

C. A Day in the Zoo

1. What is it like to spend a day in the zoo? Could you make a list of all the things that you do at different times of the day? What do you think of?
2. How does it feel to have people looking at you all the time? Is it a good or bad thing? Why?
3. If you could tell the people anything, what would you tell them?
4. What's the best thing that happens to you during the day? The worst?

Story Topic 19: Through a Lion's Eyes, *continued*

D. The Day Ends

1. At what time does your day end? What happens to you when it's time to close the zoo? Do you stay outside all night? Do you come inside? Do you have a choice?
2. What's the last thing you think about before you drift off to sleep each night?

Let's See It Happen

Before you begin to write about what it's like to spend a day in a zoo as a lion, it may actually help you to draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think that this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have thought about what it might be like to be a lion in the zoo, it is time to write your story. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

What do you think of when you hear the words “buried treasure?” Most of us automatically think of buried treasure as having something to do with pirates of long ago who used to roam the high seas attacking merchant ships and stealing their cargo and valuables. To most of us, the words “buried treasure” probably also make us see huge chests filled with gold coins or precious jewels neatly dropped into a hole beneath a palm tree on a deserted island somewhere in the middle of the ocean.

One of the most famous buried treasure stories ever concerns a lost gold mine in the Superstition Mountains near Phoenix, Arizona. The Lost Dutchman Mine, as it is known, was first discovered over 100 years ago by a prospector named Jacob Waltz. This mine was supposed to contain gold nuggets beyond anyone’s wildest imagination. Supposedly they were so numerous that they could simply be picked up off the ground and pulled from the walls of the mine itself. Jacob Waltz, however, died before he told many people about his mine, so for all these years it has been nearly impossible to find. Other people who may have known the mine’s location have also long since died. The only real clues that have been left behind are several old maps that are difficult to follow. What makes the mine even harder to find is the Superstition Mountains themselves, because they are very steep, very harsh, and very difficult to travel in. For the past 100 years, many treasure hunters have searched the mountains for the Lost Dutchman Mine, and many have died trying. But to this day it has never been found.

In this story you are going to go on a buried treasure hunt, and what you are hunting for is entirely up to you. You could be hunting in the mountains or in your very own backyard. And remember the “treasure” does not always have to mean money or jewels. A “treasure” can be anything that someone considers valuable. The one thing that any treasure hunter needs, though, is a good treasure map that leads the searcher to the exact spot where the treasure is buried. You’ll need to find one of these somewhere before you can begin your search. Your job in writing this story is to tell all about following the map and what you had to do to find the treasure. And, of course, do surprise your reader with what that treasure is. Happy hunting!

Let's Think About It

A. The Treasure Map

1. How did you find your treasure map? Where were you when you found it? What were you doing at the time?
2. Describe your treasure map. What does it look like? What is it made of?

B. Getting Ready

1. Will you hunt for this treasure alone? Will others help you? Who are your helpers?
2. Where will you be hunting for your treasure? Does the map say what treasure you will find?
3. What things do you decide you will need to find the treasure? Where do you get these things?

Story Topic 20: The Treasure Map, *continued*

C. The Hunt

1. Where does the map tell you to start your search?
2. What steps must you follow to get to the place where the treasure is buried?
3. When you get to the treasure spot, what kind of spot is it?
4. What do you have to do to get the treasure? Describe your digging, if you have to dig, or whatever else you have to do to get the treasure in your hands.

D. The Moment

1. What must be done to open the treasure up?
2. What happens to you when you see the treasure for the first time?
3. Is the treasure what you expected it to be? Is it a bonanza or a disappointment?
4. What do you decide to do with your treasure?

Let's See It Happen

Before you begin to write about your search for buried treasure, it may actually help you to draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think that this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have thought about just what is going to happen along the road to buried treasure, it's time to write your story. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Have you ever dreamed of being a performer? Of standing on a stage in front of a large audience where everyone has come especially to hear you sing, dance or act? Perhaps you already have some experience with performing in front of audiences. Most of us, at one time or another, have taken part in school recitals or plays. Maybe having to stand up in front of strangers and deliver a line was just a bit frightening for you. Or, on the other hand, maybe you find it exciting to be the center of attention, knowing that every person's eyes are fixed on you.

There are many ways that people have found to perform and many different reasons that people will come to watch a show. Singing songs, dancing dances and acting in plays are the kinds of performances we think about most often, but these are only a few of the things that performers do on stage. Jugglers and acrobats are very popular with audiences because people like to watch the performers do feats of strength and balance with their bodies. Sometimes people will come simply to hear a person read or recite poetry. The audiences at poetry recitals enjoy the beauty and the meaning that the performer puts into her words. One kind of performer that is always a hit with young and old alike, however, is a good magician.

Is there anything quite as exciting as making objects vanish into thin air and making them reappear again? Or what could be more amazing than watching a magician free himself from a locked trunk? Or watching him saw his assistant in half and put her back together again? Magicians surely provide their audiences with a form of excitement that no other kind of performers can.

In the story that you will write, you will be a magician on a stage performing for an audience. You are at the end of your performance, and you have developed a trick to close your show that you believe to be the best trick any magician has ever done. No one has ever seen this trick, and this is the first time you will do it in front of a real, live audience. As the writer of the story, you must tell about how you perform this great trick and what the trick is all about.

Let's Think About It

A. The Performer

1. Who are you? What name do you go by?
2. How do you look on stage? How are you dressed?
3. Do you have any assistants on stage with you? What do they help with?
4. Where are you performing? Why are you here? What kind of audience do you have?

B. The Act

1. What kinds of equipment do you have on stage with you?
2. What kinds of tricks have you already done in your performance? Could you list them in the order in which you did the tricks?
3. How has the audience liked your performance to this point?
4. Has anything gone wrong with any of your tricks?

Story Topic 21: The Magic Trick, *continued*

C. The Big Trick

1. Explain how the final, big trick works. Explain how you do it step by step.
2. Why is this trick so special?
3. Could anything bad happen if this trick doesn't work right?
4. What good will happen if the trick works?
5. How does the trick turn out?

Let's See It Happen

Before you begin to write about your big magic trick, it may actually help you to draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think that this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you know just what your big trick is and just how you are going to make it work, it's time to write your story. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

A long time ago, when I was about 10 years old, I used to have a favorite pair of pants. They were called clamdiggers. They were called this because the legs didn't go all the way down to your feet. Instead they stopped about half-way down your calf, leaving the rest of your leg bare. They were just the kind of pants a person would want if he really were going to dig for clams, because he'd never have to worry about getting the bottom of his pants wet.

Anyway, when I was 10 years old you were nobody if you didn't have a pair of clamdiggers to wear around the neighborhood. I remember pestering my mother day and night for a pair of clamdiggers until she was ready to pull her hair out. And my pestering continued until she finally gave in and bought me my pants. But that's just the beginning of this story.

My new white clamdiggers looked just as great and felt just as great as I thought they would. They felt and looked so great, in fact, that I didn't want to take them off – ever. My mother reluctantly continued to allow me to wear them for four or five days in a row. By that time they were filthy, and it was hard to tell that they were a white pair of pants. But that didn't matter to me. Unfortunately, it mattered a great deal to my mother, who was afraid of what the neighbors would think when they saw me running around in the same pair of pants for a month straight. So the day finally came when I couldn't sneak the clamdiggers out of the hamper anymore before my mother woke up. She laid down the law – either give them up to be washed or get washed with them. I don't know whether my mother was really serious about washing me with the clamdiggers or not, but I often wonder what would have happened if I had continued to be stubborn.

By using my experience with the clamdiggers, you can write an interesting story. Let's say there's a kid who has a favorite article of clothing that she refuses to give up to the washing machine because she enjoys wearing it so much. Let's also say that this kid receives the same command from her mother – give it up or get washed with it. But for fun, suppose this kid in your story chooses to get washed instead. Think about what that might be like, from the washing right through to the drying and the folding. When you write your story, however, remember that it is supposed to be a funny story, so the rule will be that nothing bad can happen to the kid. In writing this story, maybe you can teach a lesson about why it's good not to be stubborn.

Let's Think About It

A. The Kid

1. What will you name your character?
2. Where does your character live? What kind of kid is your character?
3. What is the article of clothing that is so special? Why is it so special?
4. When did the character get this article of clothing? How long has your character worn it without taking it off?
5. What has this kid's mom tried to get her to take it off?
6. What will happen if the kid does not take the article of clothing off?

Story Topic 22: Wash Day, *continued*

B. Wash and Dry

1. Describe as completely as you can what happens to this kid. How does she end up getting washed? Is it in a machine? What kind? Is it at home? Does her mom take her to a laundromat? What do the other people at the laundromat think when they see this happening? Is the kid washed by hand?
2. If the kid gets washed in a machine, what's that like? Think about how a washing machine works from the times you've watched someone wash clothes.
3. What happens when the kid comes out of the wash? How does the drying take place. In a dryer? On a clothesline? What's the ride in the dryer like? How do you safely hang a kid on a clothesline to dry?

C. After the Wash

1. How does this kid feel about what has happened? Has she learned anything about listening or about being stubborn? Will she remove the article of clothing the next time her mom asks for it?

Let's See It Happen

Before you begin to write about this stubborn kid, it may actually help you to draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think that this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for the drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you understand just how this story is going to work, it's time to write it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Have you ever seen the movie *Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*? Or have you ever read the book, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, on which the movie was based? If so, then you will remember the story of how Charlie, a poor young boy with a pure and honest heart, has his fondest dream come true when he wins the chance to tour the grandest chocolate factory in the entire world. You might remember, too, that nothing inside the factory was as Charlie imagined it would be. The rooms, the machines and even the workers were, should we say, a bit odd?

There are many things in our world that look good on the outside. Later, however, just like Charlie in the chocolate factory, we find out that appearance is not everything. This doesn't mean that all things that look good always turn out to be bad for us. It just means that they can often turn out to be quite different from what we expect.

If you think about it, you have probably had experiences with this sort of thing already. Have you ever pleaded for your parents to buy you a pet, a puppy perhaps? Who can resist the sad, round eyes of a plump little basset hound or the frisky playfulness of any young pup? On the outside, having a puppy of your own looks good – and it is good. But what we don't often think about beforehand is that caring for a puppy or any pet can take a lot of time. A puppy has to be housetrained, fed, brushed, walked regularly and, above all, played with. It needs lots of love and attention. The responsibility of keeping a pet is a big one, and it often turns out to be far more work than we imagine.

The story that you are going to write deals with something that turns out to be far different than expected or imagined. It takes place in a toy store. In this story you are going to have the one wish granted that almost all kids wish for at one time or another, and that is to be left alone in a toy store for an entire night. No one will come in to bother you until morning, and you have the entire store to play in. BUT—remember that this is a story that is all about things turning out to be different than expected. You see, up until now no kid has ever actually spent a night in a toy store alone. You're the first kid to ever have that wish granted. So, up until now, no one actually knows for sure what goes on in a toy store after the doors are locked . . . and the lights go out . . . and all the workers go home. But you know, don't you? Because you were there and you saw it all happen. And now you can tell kids everywhere what it was like.

Let's Think About It

A. How It Happened

1. Why were you at the toy store? Who was with you?
2. What toy store were you at? What is special about this toy store? Where is it? Does it have a name?
3. Describe what this toy store is like.
4. How did you come to be alone in the toy store overnight? Did you get in yourself? Did you sneak in? Did you hide until everyone was gone? Did you get left behind somehow?

Story Topic 23: The Toy Store, *continued*

B. When the Lights Go Out

1. What was the first thing you did when you realized you were all alone?
2. What was it like to be all by yourself in a quiet toy store?
3. Did anything unusual happen while you were in the toy store?
4. Did you spend most of the night doing things yourself? If so, what kinds of things did you do?
5. Did you spend most of the night watching things happen. If so, what did you observe?
6. Were you at any time frightened to be in the toy store overnight?

C. Getting Out

1. How did you get back out of the toy store? Did someone come to rescue you? Did you wait until the store opened again? Did you sneak back out?
2. What turned out to be different about the toy store than you expected?
3. Would you ever want to spend the night in a toy store again? Why or why not?

Let's See It Happen

Before you begin writing about your experiences in the toy store, it may actually help you to draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think that this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have thought about what is going to happen overnight inside the toy store, it's time to write about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

What would you say is the most important job someone does in your town? It's probably hard to decide what the most important job in a town would be. Many people have important jobs that help a town to run right. If you were to ask all of your classmates to say what the most important job in town is, they would probably give many different answers, and most of those answers would likely be very good ones.

Doctors are certainly people we think of as having important jobs. What would it be like if there were no one to make us well again when we became sick? No doctors would mean no hospitals, and without hospitals where would we go to have our tonsils taken out, our broken bones fixed, and to have operations if we had something seriously wrong with our bodies? Doctors certainly have to be considered among the most important people in any town or community.

Grocers, the folks who run our food stores, certainly have very important jobs. It would be hard to imagine not being able to walk into a food store to simply buy the things we need to eat and to live. Think of what your life would be like if you had to travel all the way to a farm to buy things like eggs, milk, and vegetables. That's exactly what you would have to do if there were no men and women to run the supermarkets in your town. That might be easy for someone who lived in the country. But imagine if you lived in a big city! Grocers are very important in making our lives easy and convenient.

Teachers might also get some votes for having the most important job in town. Educating children is a very big job and one that needs to be done right. Think about what you would be doing right now if there were no teachers at your school. You wouldn't be at school, would you? You'd probably be at home playing. While that might seem like a good idea now, what would happen later on when you became an adult and you found you were not able to do simple math or spell correctly or even write simple sentences? You wouldn't feel very good about yourself, would you? So you see, that teacher standing in front of your classroom has a very important job. Be glad your teacher is there.

The most important job in a town, however, is probably the job of being a police officer. Why? Think about it. Without police officers to help keep everyone safe, none of the people we've already mentioned would be able to do their jobs at all! Police officers make sure that everyone follows the rules that townspeople are required to live by. By doing this, they provide us with a very important thing called *order*. Without order it would be very hard to live a happy life or to get anything done. Every single person would have his own idea about how things should be done. Police officers make sure that we all look at the rules the same way.

Probably one of the best things that you can learn to do is to learn to look at the police officer as a good friend. His job is to be there for you when you need help, and he is the one person you can always turn to when you do need help. One of the things we often forget, however, is that we can help our local police officers and that they count on us to help them. When we see someone breaking the rules of our town or doing something that endangers others, it's our responsibility to help the officer put a stop to it. And that brings us to what this story is about.

Story Topic 24: I Help Officer (Name), *continued*

In the story that you will write, you are going to tell about the time you were able to help your local police officer. What you help him with is entirely up to you. And this story does not need to be based on anything that you have ever really done. If you've never actually helped a police officer before, you can still think about how you might do it if you ever got the chance.

Let's Think About It

A. The Officer

1. Who is the officer you are going to help? What is his name?
2. Describe this officer. What does he look like?
3. What kind of person is this officer? How do you and your friends feel about him? Why do you feel this way?
4. What is this officer's job in your town?

B. The Problem

1. What has happened that you need to report to the officer?
2. What information do you have about what you are reporting that will help the officer? How will it help him? How do you get this information to him?
3. Do you go with the officer to do what needs to be done? If so, describe what happens, including anything you may do.

C. The Solution

1. What ends up happening because you helped? How have you helped your town? How have you helped yourself?
2. What do the people in your town think of your help?

Let's See It Happen

Before you begin writing about how you helped the police officer, it may actually help you to draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think that this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have planned out how you will be of help to the officer, it's time to write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Of all the kinds of buildings that have ever been built, the castle is perhaps one of the most interesting and most beautiful. But not many people understand what castles are all about. When most of us think of castles, we usually think of fairy tales and knights in shining armor. Many people may not even realize that castles are real. They are still found in plenty of places in the world, mostly in Europe. People can actually visit many of these interesting and unusual castles. In fact, there are a few people who still live in these castles, although not for the same reason that people originally lived in them. The story behind the castle is very interesting.

During the Middle Ages, about 900 years ago, almost all of the land in Europe was owned by princes, nobles, and lords. And very seldom were they happy with the land they already had. They were always trying to get more, and because of this, the lords were always fighting battles with one another to see if they could take each other's land. The only way they could protect themselves was by building high fortresses to live in that could keep attackers away. These fortresses were called castles.

The whole idea of the castle was to make it totally impossible for an attacker to get inside. For this reason they were almost always built on steep hills and were surrounded by a fence of stakes called a *palisade*. Inside this palisade was a deep ditch or *moat* filled with water that could only be crossed using drawbridges. Inside the moat the attacker would run into a very tall stone wall, called a *bailey wall*, which was really the outer wall of the entire castle.

Inside the bailey wall one would find huge *courtyards*. This is where the lord would invite all the villagers to stay in safety when the castle was under attack. The lord and his family usually lived in the *keep*. This is the part of the castle with the tall towers, and these tall towers were where they usually lived. Below the keep were the castle's *dungeons*, where prisoners were usually kept. All in all, it was nearly impossible for an attacking army to get inside a castle. There were just far too many difficult obstacles to be overcome.

Understanding how a castle is built is very important for the story you are going to write. In this story you must rescue a friend who is being held in a castle dungeon, and you must use your skill and cleverness to get past all the castle's obstacles. And remember, if you get into the castle and do succeed in reaching the dungeon without being spotted or captured, that's only half the job. You still have to get back out. Otherwise, someone will have to come in to rescue you. You'll need to be really tricky. Remember, a castle is built especially to keep people out, and there are guards everywhere!

Let's Think About It

A. The Prison and the Prisoner

1. Who is the person you are trying to rescue? What has he or she done to be imprisoned?
2. Who owns the castle? What is this lord's name? Tell something about him. What kind of lord is he?
3. What does this castle look like? Does it have a name?
4. Where is this castle located? Is it in a particular country or place?

Story Topic 25: The Rescue, *continued*

B. The Plan

1. Describe your plan to rescue your friend. What is going to make it difficult to get all the way to the castle's dungeon and back again safely?
2. At what time of day will you attempt your rescue? Why?
3. Are you going to attempt this rescue alone? Who else might be with you?

C. The Attack

1. Describe in a step-by-step fashion how you use your imagination and quick thinking to defeat each of the castle's defenses.
2. When you reach the dungeon, what difficulty do you have in releasing your friend? How do you get it done?

D. The Retreat

1. Describe in a step-by-step manner how you and your friend work your way back out of the castle safely.
2. What do you and your friend do once you are again safely outside the palisade?

Let's See It Happen

Before you begin to write about how you will rescue your friend from the castle dungeon, it may actually help you to draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have a plan in mind for successfully rescuing your friend from the dungeon, write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

From time to time when I was young, some strange people would visit my home. These people were sometimes friends of my parents or people they worked with. They would usually come over on holidays like Labor Day, Memorial Day, or the Fourth of July for picnics and backyard barbecues. Some of them would come back at other times, but most of them I never saw again. You may have similar mysterious visitors show up where you live from time to time.

Without a doubt, the strangest visitors to ever visit my house were some of my mother's relatives. My mother's family came from Hungary, a country in eastern Europe. Every now and then one of my mother's uncles or aunts would appear at our house to spend the night while they were passing through on the way to visit still other relatives.

Some of my mother's relatives scared me just a bit. They dressed differently, they talked funny, and they had different manners and customs than my family did. They always seemed to be just a bit dark and mysterious. It was probably just my imagination, but I used to think they looked at me funny. It was kind of like I imagined the way the witch would have looked at Hansel and Gretel while she was fattening them up. One of the things I did enjoy about visits from my mother's relatives, however, was that they never showed up without a gift for each child in the family.

Some of the gifts these people brought were as unfamiliar and unusual as the people themselves. Many of the items we received as gifts were handmade items – dolls, games, articles of clothing – things that we could tell had taken much effort and time for someone to make. They were not the kinds of things you would find at the local store. And this is where the idea for the story you are going to write comes from.

To write this story you will need to pretend that you receive a sudden visit from an unknown relative. This relative is from a faraway place. This relative has brought you a wonderful gift – an expensive, handmade doll. The doll's name is Annie, and you are happy to receive it. But there is something that is a little bit unusual about Annie. It's something that you don't notice until sometime after the relative has left. That's when you discover that Annie is something more than just a doll. In fact, she is like no other doll in the world.

Let's Think About It

A. The Relative

1. Who is this mysterious relative who has come to visit? Where is he or she from? What does he or she look like? What makes this relative so unusual?

B. The Gift

1. Describe the doll, Annie. What does she look like? What is she made of? How big is she? What is she wearing? What about her looks different from other dolls you have had?
2. How do you feel about receiving this gift? What do you do with Annie after you receive her?

Story Topic 26: Absolutely Amazing Annie, *continued*

C. The Discovery

1. What do you discover is amazing about Annie? How do you discover this? When does this discovery take place.
2. Once you make your discovery about Annie, what do you do? Is this discovery something that must be kept a secret? Why? Can it be shared? If so, who do you share it with?

D. A Friend for Life?

1. What becomes of Annie? Does she remain with you. Where do you keep her?

Let's See It Happen

Before you begin to write about Annie, it may actually help you to draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think that this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have thought about what makes Annie so absolutely amazing, it's time to write your story about her. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle and an ending. Try to spell the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Do you own a pet? Maybe you have an ordinary pet like a dog or a cat. Or maybe you have a more unusual pet like a parrot or a snake. People keep all kinds of animals as pets – big animals, small animals, wild animals, and tame ones. There's no telling what kind of animal a person might keep as a pet, but all pets have one thing in common – their owners love them and want to keep them safe.

How would you feel if you suddenly lost your favorite pet? Suppose your pet ran away or got left behind while your family was off on a trip. You would probably feel heartbroken. You could never be sure if you'd ever get to see your pet again. It would probably feel as if you had lost your best friend.

Did you ever stop to think how your pet would feel if it were lost? He would probably be just as lonely and scared as you. He would probably try to do everything he could to find his way back home again.

In this story you are going to write about what it is like to be a pet that has been left behind on a family outing. Your owners do not know that you have been forgotten, and your story will be all about what it was like to find your way back home again.

Let's Think About It

A. You

1. What kind of pet are you? What do you look like?
2. Do you have a name?
3. What makes you a special pet?
4. Where do you live? Who are your owners?

B. Your Owners

1. What kind of people own you?
2. Why is it good to belong to these people? Why are they special? Why do you love them?
3. What kinds of things do you like to do with them?

C. How Did It Happen?

1. Where was the family when you got lost?
2. How did you get separated from them?
3. Did you watch the family drive away? Did you chase after them?

D. Knowing You're Lost

1. How did you feel when you realized you were alone? Why did you feel this way? What did you do?

Story Topic 27: The Lost Pet *continued*

E. Traveling Home

1. How did you know which way to go to get home?
2. How long a trip was it to get home?
3. Were there any problems you had that made it hard to find your way home?
4. Did you meet any other people or animals along the way?
5. Was there anything scary about finding your way home?
6. What were you thinking about while you were traveling?

F. Getting Back

1. What was the first thing you saw when you got home?
2. What were you feeling like outside and inside by the time you reached your front yard?
3. What did you do when your owner held you in her arms again?
4. What did your owner do when she saw you again?
5. If you were able to talk, what would you have said to your owner?

Let's See It Happen

Before you begin to write about what it's like to be a lost pet, it may actually help you to draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think that this will actually help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have thought about what it would be like to be a lost pet trying to get back home again, it's time to write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

When you look up in the sky, what do you see? The sun? The moon and stars? Puffy white clouds drifting across a sea of blue? Did you ever watch a jet airplane soar across the sky and think of the people inside it and where they might be going? Does it ever seem amazing to you that people can travel through the air safely that high up in the sky?

You may not know it, but it was not that long ago that airplanes and helicopters and rockets didn't exist. Motorized flying machines have only existed for about the last hundred years. Nowadays we take flying for granted because we have grown up with airplanes and other flying machines. Today the thought of people flying through the sky seems just as natural as the thought of people riding bicycles. But it wasn't always so.

When people first thought about flying, they thought they could do it like the birds – by strapping on a pair of wings and jumping from a high place. Most people who tried to fly like this usually failed. Either they had the wrong equipment or they didn't know the real secret to flying like a bird. But guess what? You do know this secret.

The story you are going to write is all about the time you discovered the secret of flying and decided to try it out – all by yourself. You thought about it, you planned it out, you knew what to do, and you did it. And it worked!

Let's Think About It

A. The Idea

1. What made you think you could fly? Did you see, hear, or read something that showed you the secret of flying?
2. What is the secret of flying? What do you know about flying like a bird that others don't?
3. Why is it important for you to be able to fly?
4. Have you told any of your friends about the secret of flight? What did they think of it?

B. The Equipment

1. What things have you collected that will help you to fly?
2. How do you plan to use these things?
3. Why did you choose these items instead of others to help you fly?

C. The Place

1. Where did you choose as the spot for your flight? What's so special or important about this spot?

D. The Flight

1. How did you take off? Did you run? Leap?
2. What did it feel like to leave the ground?

Story Topic 28: The Day I Flew, *continued*

3. How could you control where you went?
4. Once you knew you could fly, where did you go?
5. How long did your flight last?
6. Did you meet anything on your flight?
7. Where did you land? How did you land?

E. Thinking About It

1. Now that your flight is over, how do you feel about flying? Why do you feel this way?
2. Will you share your secret with anyone else? Why?
3. Do you plan to fly again? Where and when?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write about the secret of flying like a bird, it may actually help you to draw some scenes from the story. If you think this will help you write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you understand what it takes to fly like a bird, it's time to write the story about just how you did it. Make sure your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you used correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, be sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Have you ever made use of a shortcut because you were in a hurry to get somewhere? Maybe you were running late for ball practice and it was necessary to save a little time. Did you take a shortcut down a side street or through the trees to make your trip just a little faster? Maybe when you've been out driving with your family, the driver has had the bright idea of taking a shortcut that would cut the length of the drive in half.

When shortcuts work, they're real time savers. The bad thing about them, though, is that they don't always work. Especially if you're the first person to try the shortcut. Often when you take a shortcut that you've been told about, but that you've never actually taken before, you can get yourself into a real mess. One wrong turn on a shortcut can get you totally lost. When this happens, your shortcut often turns into a trip you wish you'd never begun. I know. I've taken shortcuts that have added hours to a 15-minute trip.

The story you are going to write is about a shortcut that you decide to take one day on the way home from school. It's a shortcut that you've heard about before from your friends, but it's not one that you've tried. The kind of shortcut it is and where it goes will probably depend on where you live. If you live in the city, this shortcut may be a street or alley that you've never been down before, or it could be a shortcut through a park you've never been to before. If you live in the country, the shortcut could be one that goes through the woods or along a river or stream. Or maybe it could be one that goes across the water or through a farmer's field. There are many different kinds of shortcuts that you could use as the subject for your story.

Since shortcuts don't always work out for the best, though, something out of the ordinary needs to happen along this shortcut. Maybe you will discover something unusual. Maybe you will get yourself lost and have to find your way back. Maybe you will find out that this shortcut can take you places you never thought you would go or never thought you could go. You will decide what unusual thing will happen to you. It's your shortcut. You took it, and where it leads you is locked away inside your imagination.

Let's Think About It

A. The Decision

1. Why do you need to use a shortcut today?
2. What route do you normally take home?
3. Who told you about the shortcut? What kind of a shortcut is it?
4. How do you feel about taking this shortcut? Is there anything to be afraid of?
5. Where does the shortcut go? What makes it different from taking the long way (besides the fact that it will save time)?

Story Topic 29: The Shortcut, *continued*

B. The Shortcut

1. What happens when you start on the shortcut? Do things change? If they do, how do they change? Do your feelings change as you walk along the shortcut? How?
2. What sorts of things do you encounter along the shortcut? Does anything strange happen along the way?
3. Do you meet any interesting characters along the way?

C. Back on Course

1. How did you know when you had finished with the shortcut?
2. Did the shortcut take you where you expected it to or where you were told it would?
3. Would you take this shortcut again? Would you tell your friends to take it? Why or why not?

Let's See It Happen

Before you begin to write about what happened when you decided to try this unusual shortcut, it may actually help you to draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think that this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have thought about what is going to happen to you as you take this strange shortcut on the way home from school, it's time to write your story about it. Make sure your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Did you ever wonder why dogs do some of the weird things that they do? Sometimes I stop for a minute or two and watch my dog as he goes through some of his antics. Some of the things he does seem so ridiculous that I have to shake my head and laugh. If you have a dog of your own, maybe you'll recognize some of these behaviors.

My dog loves to chase his tail. Every once in a while he will simply stop whatever he happens to be doing and will spin around and around like a top that's just been let loose. Of course, after he's done this for a minute or so, he's so dizzy that he can barely stand up. So to make himself undizzy, he starts right back in again, spinning in the opposite direction. He never does manage to catch his tail, though. And sometimes I wonder what he'd do if he actually caught his tail.

During the summer, my backyard is filled with butterflies. If I let my dog out in the yard, he'll run around trying to catch them in his mouth. He darts from one to another, jumping up in the air as high as he can, snapping at them. Of course, the butterflies are too fast for him, but he doesn't know that. After ten minutes of bouncing around the yard like a pinball, he gets so tired he has to lie down in the shade. Then the butterflies land right on his nose and he doesn't even care.

At night my dog likes to sleep in bed with me. He likes to sleep down at the bottom of the bed, and he always wants to sleep on my legs. No matter which way I roll over or how much extra room there is in the bed, he will always position himself so some part of his body is on top of my feet or legs. Sometimes I think he does this on purpose so I can't go anywhere without him knowing about it.

Are all dogs like this? Are they really as silly as they act? Or is it an act? Are they pulling the wool over our eyes? Sometimes when I stare into my dog's eyes I get the feeling that there's more going on in that tiny brain of his than most of us imagine. And sometimes when he's sitting in front of me and he gives me his paw and I pet him, I often think I see a slight smile on his face. This smile makes me think that he's got me right where he wants me, and I wonder who the real master is.

The reason I bring this up is that for the past few weeks I have noticed that on some nights my dog is not in bed with me when I wake up in the middle of the night. He is somewhere else in the house, and I am afraid to think about what he may be doing. I am afraid to go looking for him because I might discover what dogs really do when they know they aren't being watched by their masters.

You can be the one who discovers what dogs really do in the middle of the night when all the humans in the house are asleep, and what they do in the middle of the day when everyone is at school or at work. Pretend that you venture downstairs one night in the wee hours of the morning and find a good hiding spot – somewhere where you can watch your dog without him knowing it. Write a story about what you find. Then, the next time I look in my own dog's eyes, I'll know exactly what he's been up to.

Let's Think About It

A. Sneaking Around

1. At what time of night did you sneak out of bed to observe your dog?
2. Describe how you sneaked out of your room and the path you took to locate your dog.
3. Where is it that you hide? Why is this a good spot to watch your dog?
4. Where do you find your dog?

B. The Truth

1. Describe as fully as you can what you saw your dog doing. Try to use your imagination. Think of some of these things:
 - a. Was your dog wearing anything unusual?
 - b. Was your dog alone or were others with him?
 - c. Was your dog eating anything?
 - d. Was your dog using something around the house that only people normally use.
2. Did your dog know you were watching him? Did he ever suspect that you might be watching him?
3. Did anything happen while you were watching your dog that almost gave you away?
4. How long did you spend watching your dog?
5. How did you react to the things you saw?

C. Back to Bed

1. Describe how you were able to sneak back up into bed without being heard.

D. The Next Morning

1. When you awoke the next morning, what was your dog doing? Were things back to normal? Where did you find him?
2. Did you say anything to your dog to let him know that he'd been discovered?
3. Did you tell anyone of your discovery? Did they believe you?
4. How has your relationship with your dog changed because of what you now know?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write about what dogs really do when people aren't watching them, it may actually help you to draw some of the scenes from the story. If you think that this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you know what dogs do when people aren't watching, write your story about it. Make sure your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. Try to spell the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Most people have been to a carnival or state fair. Carnivals have a bunch of rides and games that are fun for all ages. State fairs have rides and games, but they also have exhibits which give information to people. Lots of people go to see the different kinds of farm animals or the arts and crafts displays. Ribbons are usually awarded as prizes for the best exhibits.

As carnivals and fairs grew larger and included new things to do and see, they became amusement parks or theme parks. Now visitors can also enjoy sideshows, funhouses, small zoos and dance bands. Two of the most famous theme parks are Disneyland and Walt Disney World. You may have visited Six Flags, Opryland, Hershey Park, or Sea World. It can take days to see and do everything there is to see and do at these places. Some even have famous attractions, like the world's largest Ferris wheel or the scariest roller coaster.

Carnivals and fairs sometimes move from one place to another. Some are only open at certain times of the year. Amusement parks are built in one area and stay there. They are a big business. Many people work at amusement parks, and many visitors come to enjoy the experience.

Now you know some facts about amusement parks. You can probably remember all the things that you enjoyed the last time you went to one. Keep your experiences with amusement parks, carnivals, and fairs in mind as you write your story today. You will be designing your own amusement park for yourself and other people. As you describe things, help the reader to picture what you have created.

Let's Think About It

A. The Plan

1. Why have you decided to design your own amusement park? Does anyone help you with this project?
2. What kinds of activities will you have in your amusement park? Games? Rides? Learning exhibits? Refreshment stands? Will any of these things be really unusual? Do you have activities for all ages?
3. Will your amusement park be open all year? How will the weather conditions affect your activities?

B. Building Your Amusement Park

1. How will you get the money to build your amusement park? Do you need to finish it by a certain date? Will you build it with your own company or hire other companies to help you?
2. How will you let people know about your amusement park? Will you advertise on TV? Radio? Newspapers and magazines?

C. Consider Your Creation

1. How will you deal with safety for all your activities? Will people with handicaps be able to enjoy your activities? What if a visitor gets hurt or sick?
2. How much admission will you charge? Can visitors see and do all your activities in one day? Will there ever be free admission? Are pets allowed inside your amusement park?
3. Do you provide transportation to and from your amusement park from outside areas like airports or hotels? Do you provide transportation inside your park from one place to another?
4. Are you proud of what you have done? How do other people feel about your work? What is your favorite activity at your amusement park?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story, it may help you to actually draw some pictures of the things that happened while you were planning and building your amusement park. If you think that this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in your pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about everything that is going to happen with your amusement park project and its results, write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Have you ever heard the word *spelunking*? Spelunking is a word which is used to describe the exploration of a cave. People who do this activity are called *spelunkers*. Spelunking is a hobby and a sport enjoyed by many people all over the world.

The caves that spelunkers explore come in many different shapes and sizes. The Mammoth Cave system in Kentucky contains almost 330 miles of mapped and explored passageways. Many cave passages open up into huge underground rooms. These rooms and passages can contain many different kinds of rock formations formed over time by the flow of water. Some caves even have underground streams and lakes. Visitors can actually take boat rides on these bodies of water.

Many early people used caves as places of shelter. A lot of evidence has been found to show that people called certain caves home. Some cave walls also display the artwork of ancient groups of people. This artwork tells about these ancient peoples' lives in and around the area of the cave.

But even though people no longer live in these caves, many other living things do. Spiders, certain insects, some types of fishes, salamanders, and, of course, bats are some of the wildlife that make caves their home. Those that live in the darkest parts of the cave have lost their ability to see but still manage to survive.

Many caves that have been discovered and explored are now open to the public. They have lighted walkways and even elevators so that many people can safely enjoy their cave visits and see what caves are all about. The story that you will be writing today tells about the discovery of a large cave by two of your friends. They decide to go back and do some exploring. You will be one of these spelunkers. Describe what you think you might see and find on this exciting journey.

Let's Think About It

A. The Discovery

1. How do you find out about the cave? Is it by accident, or does someone mention that it may exist?
2. What makes you decide to explore the cave? Do you tell anyone your plans? What will you take with you on your spelunking trip? What will you wear?

B. The Cave Journey

1. How large is the cave entrance? What do you see and hear as you begin your trip through the cave?
2. What do you use for light as you travel deeper into the darkness? Do you find any large caverns or rooms? What are they like?
3. How much room do you have for walking or crawling? What do some of the rock formations remind you of?

Story Topic 32: The Cave, *continued*

4. Do you find anything unusual? Do you see wildlife, underground waterways, or cave paintings? How do you and your friends react to these discoveries?
5. On some cave tours they turn the lights off so you can experience complete darkness. Does your light ever go out?

C. Exiting the Cave

1. When do you decide to go back out of the cave? What do you see and feel as you reach natural daylight again? Are you relieved? Are you happy or sad?
2. What do you think was the most exciting part of your journey? If you had the chance, would you explore a cave again? Is there anything that you would do differently?
3. Do you tell anyone about your experience in the cave? What is their reaction?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story, it may actually help you to draw some of the pictures of the things that happened while you were planning the trip and taking your cave journey. If you think that this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about everything that is going to happen on this cave adventure, write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story isn't important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Have you ever been on a small rubber raft in a swimming pool? Have you ever floated on a raft near a sandy beach? That kind of raft is meant to be used just for fun. If you have ever heard or read the story "Huckleberry Finn," you might remember that he floated down the Mississippi River on a homemade log raft with a runaway slave in order to get away from the people who were searching for them.

Rafts of all shapes and sizes have been around for a long time. They were one of the earliest means of water transportation. Early people used rafts to move goods and themselves to places along a river or across a large body of water. The rafts were made of logs or bundles of reeds tied together with some type of rope. A large pole or paddle was usually used to move the raft in the right direction.

Keep in mind that even though rafts are fun to ride on, the water that they are in can be peaceful or dangerous. The calm flow of a river can gently rock you to sleep, but a swiftly moving current can sometimes lead to rapids further downstream. Rapids are places in the river where the water rushes swiftly downhill, often over and around very large rocks. This movement can also create churning places in the water called *whirlpools*. There are many people who pay river rafting companies a lot of money for the thrill of riding a large rubber raft through these places.

Now that you know a little bit about rafts and rapids, you are going to write a story about how you built a simple log raft just for fun and ended up going for the ride of your life down a powerful river. As you write this story, let the reader picture what your raft looks like. Let your reader feel what it is like for you to ride your homemade raft through the dangerous rapids and survive to tell others about your adventures.

Let's Think About It

A. The Raft-Building Plan

1. Where are you when you decide to build this raft? Who helps you build it?
2. Where do you find the wood to construct your raft? How do you put it together?
3. How do you get the raft into the river? How do you plan to make the raft move through the water?
4. If you take supplies with you, how do you keep them on the raft?

B. The River Trip

1. Do you end up being on the raft by yourself or do other people go with you? Do you bring a pet with you?
2. How does it feel to be lazily floating downstream in peaceful water? What do you see and hear as you travel?
3. When do you realize that the water is moving faster? Are you afraid? Are you excited? What do you do as the current picks up speed?

Story Topic 33: The Raft, *continued*

4. As you see the rapids getting closer, what do you do to stay on the raft? What does it feel like as the water splashes up on you and the raft? Do you feel excitement as you ride out the bumpy journey to calm water again?

C. Back On Shore

1. What do you see and feel as you reach quiet water again and get back on shore? Are there people waiting for you? What is their reaction to your return?
2. What do you think was the most exciting part of your journey? If you had the chance, would you go on a raft adventure again? Is there anything that you would do differently?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story, it may help you to actually draw some pictures of the things that happened while you were building your raft and taking this incredible journey. If you think that this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about everything that is going to happen in your raft adventure, write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. It is not important how long your story is. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

When you look around your town or community, it's easy to see that most people live in some type of house or apartment building. But suppose you could live in a different kind of structure. Imagine living in a tree house.

Tree houses have existed for a long time in history. Early humans built rough-looking structures in trees to store food and to use as lookout stands to protect them from their enemies. People from some countries in Africa have used tree houses as part of religious ceremonies. As a rule, tree houses have not been used for permanent living quarters.

You may know someone in your circle of friends who is lucky enough to have a tree house of his very own. Maybe he built it himself, or maybe a family member helped him. It may be just a platform high up in a tree in the backyard. There may be walls or even a roof. A crude ladder of some type, or even a climbing rope, probably leads up to the entrance. A trap door may even keep out unwelcome guests. It is probably used as a fun place to meet with friends or to hold secret club meetings. Maybe it is just a place where a kid can go to have time to himself.

Now that you can probably picture what this house looks like in your mind, create a tree house of your own and describe it in a story. You will be the person lucky enough to have a large tree near your home that would be perfect for this project. However you decide to build this tree house, do a good job of describing the building process and the finished project. The reader needs to get a clear picture of what this one-of-a-kind tree house looks like.

Let's Think About It

A. The Building Plan

1. What does the tree look like where you are going to build your tree house? Will the tree branches hide the structure from curious eyes?
2. What kinds of materials are you going to use to build the tree house? Will you need help getting them up into the tree?
3. How will your tree house be protected from bad weather? Have you planned ahead for safety? How?
4. How large will this tree house be? Can more than two or three people fit in it at a time? How will you transport people and things from the ground to your tree house?

B. Building the Tree House

1. Tell about the step-by-step process you followed to build the tree house.
2. Did you paint your tree house? What color is it? Does it have windows? How will you keep it from falling into disrepair?

Story Topic 34: The Tree House, *continued*

C. The Final Product

1. Are you proud of the way your tree house looks now that it is finished?
2. Who will be allowed in your tree house? Will you let family members, friends, or pets visit you?
3. Do you have rules that your guests must follow when they visit you in your tree house? Why do you have these rules? Do guests need to know a secret password to enter? What is the password and why did you choose it?
4. What makes you think this tree house is very special? What did you learn as you were building it? Do you think there will ever come a time when this tree house is no longer important to you?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story, it may help you to actually draw some of the scenes of things that happened while you were planning and building your tree house. If you think that this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about everything that is going to happen while you build your tree house, write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Imagine seeing a spider web early in the morning just as the sun is rising. The almost invisible threads of the web catch the warming rays. Drops of dew clinging to the silk reflect the light. Suddenly you can make out the distinct pattern of the web. How can a tiny spider create something so beautiful and complicated?

Webs are made from the silk that all spiders produce. However, not all spiders build webs. Those that do make their own creations spin the silk into many shapes and sizes. The insects that they trap in these webs become their means of survival. The web can also be the spider's home.

Common house spiders spin a loosely tangled web. Platform spiders spin a sheet of silk below a woven silk net to trap their food. Other kinds of spiders spin their threads in the shape of a bowl, a dome, an orb or a triangle. Of course who could forget Charlotte in the story *Charlotte's Web*? Her difficult web-weaving pattern actually saved someone's life. Real spiders can't spell words into their webs, but garden spiders can weave a zigzag line across the center of theirs. Do you suppose they do this to attract insects?

Today you are going to write a story about a spider that builds a special web. The web will not become an insect trap or a home. This web is to be entered in a yearly web-building contest to see which spider designs the very best one. As you write this story, let the reader picture what building the web was like step-by-step. Let the reader feel what it is like for the spider to decide what to use in the creation of this web, when ordinary spider silk just might not be enough.

Let's Think About It

A. The Announcement

1. When and where is the announcement made to have this contest? Will prizes be awarded? Who are the judges? What are the rules of the contest? Can two spiders work together? Is there a time limit?
2. What kind of web-building spider is in this story? Does he have a special story name? What is he like? Is he shy, intelligent, or friendly?

B. The Plan

1. What shape will the web have? How large will it be? Will it have more than one layer? Does it have to hold a certain amount of weight?
2. Will the web contain other material as well as the silk threads? Will it have any color?
3. What will happen if weather conditions are bad? What will the spider do if people or animals brush up against the web and damage it?
4. What is it about this web that makes it outstanding compared to all the other webs?
5. How does the spider in this story go about building the web? Is the spider happy with this creation?

C. The Winner

1. Does the spider in the story win the contest? If so, why is this web chosen as the winner? If not, what happened?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story, it may help you to actually draw some pictures of the things that happened while the spider was designing and building his web for this contest. If you think that this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about everything that is going to happen during this web-building contest, write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Have you ever seen a picture of a knight? A knight was a man who lived a long time ago in Europe. He was dressed in a protective suit made of metal, and he usually rode a horse. A knight was a soldier who fought for his kind. He promised to help those who were weak and to defend the land of his lord. He rescued fair maidens and battled fierce dragons. A knight was brave, loyal, and was always polite.

Any boy who wanted to become a knight began this training at an early age. Older knights usually did the teaching. However, a knight's learning never stopped. As a true knight, he practiced his fighting skills in contests called *jousts*. A joust was usually a friendly competition, but the outcome could help a knight's reputation spread throughout the land.

When a boy reached the age of 15 or 16, he faced his greatest trials in becoming a knight. A king or lord could present him with many tests to prove his courage and bravery. Many stories were told around the castle's fireplaces about a young (almost) knight searching for a lost object of a great value or ridding the land of a ferocious dragon.

Today you are going to write a story about a young, inexperienced knight-to-be facing his biggest test. He must capture a new dragon that has entered the kingdom and bring it to the castle for all to see. With confusion in his mind about exactly what he should do, he sets out on his task. Little does he realize that the dragon is just as inexperienced as he is. As you write this story, try to help the reader see how this knight becomes all that he can be.

Let's Think About It

A. The Challenge

1. How does this young knight feel when the king or lord asks him to do this task? Is he excited? Is he scared?
2. Where is the dragon located? How will the knight get to this place? What does he know about the dragon? Remember that he does not know about the dragon's inexperience.
3. What kinds of supplies does the knight carry with him to help get the job done? How will he get the dragon back to the castle or village?
4. Does he need to get this done by a certain time? Will there be any other reward for him if he succeeds?

B. The Quest

1. What problems does the knight encounter as he heads for the place where the dragon is living? Does he ever get lost? Does he get hungry or feel tired? Does he ever feel like giving up?
2. When and where does the knight find the dragon? Is the dragon what he expected it to be?
3. When does the knight realize that the dragon is also young and inexperienced? How does he make that fact work in his favor? How does he finally capture the dragon? How does he get it back home?

Story Topic 36: A Knight in Shining Armor, *continued*

C. The Return Home

1. What problems does the knight have on his return trip? How has working all these problems out helped him become a better knight?
2. When he gets home, are there people waiting for him? What is their reaction to his return? What happens to the dragon now?
3. What does the knight think was the most exciting part of his journey? If he had the chance, would he do it again? Is there anything he would do differently?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story, it may help you to actually draw some pictures of the things that happened on the knight's journey. If you think this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about everything that is going to happen during this incredible journey, it's time to write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not really important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Do you remember the story of Humpty Dumpty? Picture him sitting high up on a wall, falling off, and then having the king's horses and men trying to put him back together. We are told that they were not successful.

Most of us would like to think that nearly all things can be made as good as new again or at least fixed. If a car has a flat tire, we fix it. If we break an arm or leg, we go to a hospital emergency room to have it reset. Why couldn't someone fix poor Humpty Dumpty?

The problem with Humpty was that he was an egg. Eggs are breakable. They can shatter into many small pieces. There's also the worry over internal injuries. Hopefully, he was hard-boiled.

What was the wall like? Perhaps it was made of hard-packed dirt that suddenly crumbled and caused him to lose his balance. Maybe it was a high brick wall surrounding a courtyard or lawn. Humpty probably climbed to the top to see what was on the other side. Do you suppose it might have been so high up that he became dizzy and fell?

Think about the king's horses and men. These people are trained to be soldiers. They certainly were not paramedics or doctors. And horses do what horses do – carry people. What about 911? It just didn't exist back then.

Now that you know a little about Humpty Dumpty and his famous fall, you are going to write a story about how you were able to do what no one else could. You will put Humpty Dumpty back together. As you write this story, let the reader picture what Humpty looks like and how you carry out this lifesaving deed. Let the reader feel what it is like for you to come upon this unfortunate happening and take charge of repairing such a famous character. Humpty's future is in your hands.

Let's Think About It

A. The Fall

1. What was Humpty Dumpty doing up on the wall? What was the wall made of?
2. What were the results of Humpty's fall? Were there any witnesses? How did the king's horses and men find out about the fall?

B. The Discovery

1. How did you find out about the accident? Did someone tell you, or did you just happen to be walking by the place where it happened?
2. Was there a lot of confusion about what to do to help Humpty? What made you decide that you could help him? How did you take charge of the problem?

Story Topic 37: Humpty Dumpty's Fall, *continued*

C. The Repair Job

1. What do you plan to do to repair Mr. Dumpty? What materials do you use? Is time important?
2. What do the other people do while you are working on Humpty? Do you need help from anyone? What kind?

D. Success

1. What is Humpty's reaction to your successful repair work? Do you think that you will ever visit with him again?
2. Are you treated like a hero by the other people? Are you glad that you did this for Humpty? How did this experience change your life?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story, it may help you to actually draw some pictures of the things that happened while you were coming upon the scene of the accident and deciding how to repair Humpty Dumpty. If you think this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about everything that is going to happen in Humpty Dumpty's repair project, write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not really important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Do you remember the story of the three little pigs? Their mother sent them out in the world to care for themselves. Each pig built his own house. However, the only house that the big, bad wolf couldn't blow down was the one made of bricks. The pigs learned a lesson in house-building the hard way.

But what about the other choices of building materials? One house that didn't hold up to all the wolf's huffing and puffing was made of straw. The other one that fell was made of sticks. Surely everyone would want a house built of bricks after realizing what happened to the third pig and the unfortunate wolf.

Yes, bricks are nice and sturdy. They are also expensive. Straw and sticks are not expensive, but they are not sturdy either. Obviously they're not strong enough to withstand an able-bodied wolf's huffing and puffing. Someone has to find a way to make sticks and straw just as good for house-building as bricks are. Then every home owner can afford to buy a secure home for himself and his family. No one would then have to worry about harsh wind conditions or severe blowing techniques carried out by desperate wolves.

And this is where you can be of help in arriving at a solution to this problem. You are going to write a story about constructing a home by using straw or sticks. But you're going to have to figure out a way to improve these materials. We've already seen that they just won't work by themselves. As you write your story, let the reader be able to picture what your improvements look like. Let the reader see what happens as you test your newly built home against the forces of the wind or the wolf. If you can come up with a good solution, you will be the builder that everyone wants to hire. Good luck!

Let's Think About It

A. The Improvements

1. How do you make straw stronger for building? Can you weave it in some special way? Can you coat it with something?
2. How do you make sticks stronger for building? Can you layer them a certain way? Can you crisscross them with something?
3. How do you plan to keep your costs down so straw and sticks are not as expensive as bricks?

B. The Test

1. What do you use to test your improved building materials? Do you build a test house? Is this an expensive test? Do you let anyone watch the testing? Why or why not?
2. What are the results of the test using the straw? What are the results using the sticks?
3. How will you advertise your new materials? Will you be the only one building houses with these new materials? Will you sell these products so that anyone can use them to build a house by himself?

C. You're in Business!

1. Will everyone be able to afford your improved building materials? Will anyone be able to get a special discount?
2. How do you feel about your accomplishment? What would you change if you tried this again?
3. In what ways has this new product been able to help people?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story, it may actually help you to draw some pictures of things that happened while you were improving the straw and sticks and running your tests. If you think that this might help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about everything that will happen with your building material improvements, it's time to write your story about it. The length of your story is not important. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Do you know what a *labyrinth* is? Do you know what a maze is? A labyrinth, like a maze, is a confusing system of passageways and paths. One of the pathways will lead you from the entrance of the maze to its exit. All the other paths will lead to dead-ends. A labyrinth is another word for a maze, but is often used to name the place or the building that contains the maze.

In earlier times, people built labyrinths to use as prisons. People locked inside very rarely escaped. Labyrinths have also been found beneath some of the Egyptian pyramids. These mazes were used to keep robbers from finding the burial places and riches of the Egyptian kings who were buried inside the pyramids.

In recent times some fancy gardens and parks have been built in the form of a maze. Some walkways wind around toward exit areas. Others end suddenly in front of high flowering hedges or walls. Many mazes have been designed to test your reaction skills. These kinds of mazes usually involve video games or designs on paper. In a game with a maze, you might have to escape from danger or work your way through a complicated layout.

There are also scientists who use mazes to study how living things behave and react in certain situations. They use laboratory rats in different labyrinths to test how quickly they can get through a real maze. The rats are timed to see if their memory can help them to finish the maze faster each time they try it.

Now that you know a little bit about labyrinths and mazes, you are going to write a story about your ability to work through a complicated three-dimensional maze. Scientists are testing and timing you to find out more about how well you can master the maze. Keep in mind that mazes can be laid out in all shapes and sizes. As you write this story, let the reader be able to really picture what this labyrinth looks like. Let the reader feel what it is like for you, the human laboratory rat, to figure out which passageway to follow as you pick and choose your way out. Use all of your mental and physical skills, and good luck!

Let's Think About It

A. The Maze

1. Why do you decide to try this experiment? Will you get anything for your efforts?
2. How many chances will the scientists give you to do this maze?
3. What is the shape of this labyrinth? How large is it? How high are the walls?
4. What is the labyrinth made of? Where is it located? Are there lights to help you see?

B. Traveling Through the Maze

1. How do you feel going through the entrance? Do you feel scared? How about excited?
2. How do you react when you make a wrong move? A successful move? Are you nervous because you know you're being timed?

Story Topic 39: Lost in a Labyrinth, *continued*

3. Do you run into anything unusual along the way through the maze?
4. Are you able to tell if you are getting closer to the exit? Do you ever begin to panic? How do you react to the possibility that you are almost out?

C. The Exit

1. What is your reaction as you reach the exit? Are you relieved, happy, sad, or disappointed? What was your time?
2. Are there people other than the scientists waiting for you? What is their reaction to your return?
3. Are the scientists pleased with your effort? Are you proud of what you did?
4. What was your favorite thing about the maze? Your least favorite? Why? Would you do it again? Why or why not?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story, it may help you to actually draw some pictures of your trip through the labyrinth. If you think that this might help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about everything that is going to happen on your labyrinth trip, it's time to write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Think about what it will be like when you can finally get your driver's license. What a big day in your life! In the beginning you might only drive the family car or truck. But as you get older, you might be able to get your own wheels. It will take a lot of time and effort to get your own car. You might end up with an older one at first. That's fine. You can have a lot of fun changing it into something that will make heads turn as you drive down the street. But no matter if your car is old or new, you'll love it because it's yours.

Cars and trucks look and operate a lot differently today from when they were first invented. The first ones were shown in circuses as unusual items. Many people didn't want to give up their horse-and-buggies for noisy, unreliable cars. But times were changing. Some early cars ran on steam, electricity, or gasoline. They were slow, smelly, noisy, and had little or no safety features. Luckily for us, Henry Ford discovered that he could make a lot of cars at one time. This was known as *mass production*. Later the price of gas came down and more people could afford to buy and operate their own horseless carriages.

Today car makers are continuing to make many changes. Cars have new colors, shapes, safety features, and more comfort. Imagine what they will be like in the future.

Then again, maybe you can do a little more than just imagine what cars of the future will be like. Imagine you're asked to design and build a perfect car or truck for the future. You'll write a story about your creative experience in putting together a car. First, you'll need to think about what the car will be like on the inside as well as the outside. This vehicle will have to be safe, affordable, and fun to drive. As you write this story, your reader will need to be able to see what your car looks like in her own mind. She will also need to be able to feel what it is like to drive this vehicle down the highway, knowing it's the best of the best. Who knows? Maybe someday your design will turn into the real thing!

Let's Think About It

A. The Plan

1. Do you work for a famous car maker? Are you designing this car as the owner of your own company? Will anyone be helping you? If so, what are their jobs?
2. Do you have to follow someone else's ideas or are you on your own? Do you have a time limit?

B. The Design

1. Is this vehicle a car or a truck? How is it shaped? How large is it? Does it have a lot of room for the people and things it might carry? What color is it?
2. What makes this car run? How does it operate?
3. What kinds of controls are on the dashboard? Does it have a radio? How about a music center? Are the buttons and knobs easy to reach?
4. What are the safety features? Are they easy to find and use? Does this vehicle have a security system?

Story Topic 40: The Dream Vehicle, *continued*

5. How comfortable is this vehicle? What are the seats made of? Can you adjust them? How? What are the windows and doors like? How do they work?
6. What makes this vehicle different from all others? Do you give it a name?

C. The Test

1. When and where do you test your model car or truck? Do you do this yourself or do you hire someone else to do it?
2. How do you set up the test? Are you excited? Are you nervous? What does the driver feel like while the vehicle is in motion?
3. How successful is your test? Did anything happen that you weren't expecting?
4. Were other people watching the test? What is their reaction to your new vehicle?
5. Are you proud of your design? Will you make any changes?
6. What is it about your car or truck that will make people want to buy it?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story, it may actually help you to draw some of the things that happened while you were planning, designing, and testing this vehicle. If you think that this might help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about what needs to happen to take your vehicle from an idea in your head to one that people can use, write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Picture in your mind what you see as you walk down the street where you live. If you look upward, what is there? Perhaps white clouds are dancing in a pale blue sky. Off in the distance you may notice rolling hills or high mountain peaks. All around you are the busy sounds of a large city or the peaceful quiet of the country or a small community. You recognize familiar buildings, neighbors' yards, and even faces.

Imagine what it would be like if your surroundings were very different. How would it feel to be standing in an underwater city? Some people think that someday an underwater city could become a reality. The floor of the ocean could give us more living space. But living underwater would take a lot of careful planning.

People living in an underwater city would require many things to survive. They would need food, oxygen, and drinkable water. They would also need living space and ways to earn a living. There would need to be some kind of transportation system to carry people living underwater to different places. People who were sick or injured would have to be cared for and someone would have to be in charge of the city to make sure things are running right.

Designers and builders of an underwater city would also face some serious problems. They would need to provide oxygen for breathing. Planners would also have to think of the water pressure. The weight of water becomes greater as you go deeper in the ocean. How could the city survive the weight of the water above it? Also, how could a permanent supply of fresh food and water be kept for these brave people living deep under the ocean? This city could not exist until the basic problems of survival were worked out in an intelligent way. Maybe you could find ways to solve the problems of living underwater.

Today you are going to write a story about a visit you made to just such an underwater city. You will report about what you have seen on your visit. You will let your reader know all about the ways that the people in the underwater city have invented to make their city run successfully. As you write your story, let the reader picture what the city looks like. Let the reader feel what it is like to descend deep into the ocean water. Strange sights and sounds will surely be a part of your great adventure.

Let's Think About It

A. The Assignment

1. Is this assignment to visit the underwater city a part of your job? What kind of job do you have? What is your reaction? Are you excited or scared?
2. What is the name of the underwater city? Where is it located? Who sets up the details of your visit? Do you need any special supplies? Are you going by yourself?

B. The Visit

1. How do you get from the ocean's surface to the underwater city? Do other people travel with you? Can you feel the pressure changing? What does this feel like? How long does it take to reach the city from the surface?

Story Topic 41: The Underwater City, *continued*

2. When you first reach the city, who greets you? What are the people like? What do you see and hear?
3. As you travel through the underwater city, what seems the same as where you live? What is different?
4. Are the people friendly and helpful? Do you meet people that are your own age? What jobs do people have? How do they relax and have fun?
5. Do the people in the city have all that they need to survive? Do you notice any problems? How do you keep track of what you see and do?

C. Back On Top

1. What does it feel like to come back up to the surface? Are you glad and relieved? Will you keep in touch with anyone in the city?
2. What do you think was the most exciting part of your trip? What new things did you learn? If you had the chance, would you visit the underwater city again?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story, it may actually help you to draw some pictures of things that happened during your visit to the underwater city. If you think that this might help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about everything that will happen on your visit to the underwater city, it's time to write your story about it. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Have you ever wished that you could spend a very special day with someone? Suppose you could really do this. Somehow, magically, you could actually visit with three people of your own choosing. They wouldn't even have to live in this time period. Imagine spending time with Abraham Lincoln, Christopher Columbus, or even Henry VIII.

These would be the guidelines for your visit. You get to choose one person from each of three categories. The first person has to be a friend. The second person has to be a relative. The third person can be someone famous. Think carefully, because you will only be given one chance to make this special visit. Perhaps you might choose a good friend that you haven't seen for a long time. Maybe the relative is someone who lived a long time ago, like a great grandmother or grandfather. The famous person you'll visit could be someone that you loved watching in a movie or a sports star who scored the winning run, basket, or touchdown for your favorite team. There would be so many things you could tell or ask a famous person.

After you make your choices, you will go to a place where your visit can be arranged. Don't worry about transportation or making special reservations. The whole idea is to plan a perfect day so that you can enjoy all the time you have with these special people.

Now that you know a little bit about the kinds of choices you can make, you are going to write a story about how this once-in-a-lifetime experience will actually work. As you write your story, let your reader picture what your special day looks like. Let the reader feel what it is like for you to visit with these people. This will be a memory to treasure always.

Let's Think About It

A. The Choices

1. How do you find out about this amazing opportunity to visit three special people? Does someone tell you about it? Is it something you win in a contest?
2. Who is in charge of setting up this experience? Is it one person or a group of people? Do they charge a lot of money for this?
3. Who do you choose from each category? Why do you choose these certain people and not others? Are you satisfied with your choices?

B. The Day's Plans

1. Where do you go to get this day started? How are you and all of your choices brought together? Are you excited, scared, or nervous?
2. Are you able to plan your activities for the day together with your special people? Or is everything already planned for you? Can you make changes?
3. Is everyone you meet pleased and excited with the choices for the day? Do they let you take pictures with a camera or camcorder?
4. What do you do in the morning? What do you do in the afternoon? Are you able to spend some time alone with each person?

Story Topic 42: A Special Day, *continued*

5. What do you do for meals and transportation?
6. Where and when do you meet when the day is done? What is everyone feeling or thinking about as this day comes to a close? How does everyone get back to where they came from?

C. Looking Back

1. What do you feel when you are back home and think back on everything that happened on this special day? Are you pleased with the choices you made?
2. What do you think was the most exciting part of your day?
3. How will you remember your experience? Do you have a picture or videotape? Will you make a scrapbook?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story, it may help you to actually draw some pictures of the things that happened while you were making your choices and planning this incredible day. If you think that this might help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about this unusual opportunity, it's time to write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Have you ever been on a picnic? No one knows who first thought of picnics. Maybe it was a family living in a cave a million years ago. Could they have discovered that a meal cooked over an open fire was very enjoyable? Later on, people went on picnics to get away from the hustle and bustle of life. It was relaxing to enjoy a simple meal by a cool country stream. Some folks even brought blankets to use as tablecloths. A few clever people carried all their picnic supplies in old baskets. They sometimes carried these baskets a long way to perfect picnic spots they had discovered. Picnics were worth the effort.

Years later, storekeepers discovered that they could sell picnic baskets filled with dinnerware, silverware, glassware, and fancy linen. All you needed to supply was the food. Carpenters also built picnic tables and benches. Picnic supplies had become a big business.

The best thing about picnics is that they can be simple or fancy. You can go on a picnic by yourself. You can also invite a whole lot of people to go with you. There always seems to be enough food at a picnic. Some families have their family reunions at picnics. Schools have end-of-the-year picnics for students and teachers. They eat hamburgers and hot dogs and play games like softball or kickball. Picnics are fun for all ages.

But not all the guests at a picnic may be of the human kind. Consider the ants. Ants look forward to a picnic, too, but to them it means a matter of survival. Ants called *scouts* are always on the lookout for morsels of food to take back to their colonies. The picnic food, even with the picnickers nearby, is worth the risk.

The story you are going to write today concerns a time when a certain ant discovers a luscious picnic. As the lead ant scout of this colony, he cannot believe his good fortune. You will be the ant scout in this story. You must come up with a plan to get as much food as you can from the picnic back to your anthill. You must do this quickly before you are discovered and your good fortune comes to a quick end. Let your reader picture how your plan works and what the results are.

Let's Think About It

A. The Place

1. What kind of ant are you? Are you intelligent? Brave? Are you a good leader?
2. What does the picnic area look like? Is it in a field, on a lawn, on a rock, or under a tree? Is there a picnic table or a blanket spread on the ground?
3. What kinds of food do you see or smell? How many people can you see?

B. The Plan

1. How will you inform the other ants of your discovery?
2. How will you and your army be able to carry back the greatest amount of food in the shortest amount of time?
3. How many ants will be involved in this picnic raid?

Story Topic 43: The Picnic, *continued*

4. How will you avoid being discovered by the humans? If you are discovered, what will you do?
5. After you get home, where will all the food be stored?
6. Did the weather affect your raid? What was the weather like at the picnic?

C. Home At Last

1. How does the rest of the colony react to your discovery and your success? Are you considered a hero? Or are you just an ordinary worker doing his job?
2. Now that you think back on it, how did your plan work? Is it a plan that you will use again at other picnics?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story, it may help you to actually draw some pictures of the things that happened while you were forming your plans and taking the food back to your home. If you think that this might help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about everything that is going to happen during your picnic food raid, it's time to write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Many people are fascinated by the sight of a rainbow. The bands of color arc across the sky. A rainbow means that sunshine is on its way, and the storm is ending. To some people, the true beauty of a rainbow is in its colors. The colors are formed when the sun's rays reflect off the droplets of rain left in the air. It is even possible for double rainbows to develop.

Many years ago, a person wrote a song about birds being able to fly over a rainbow. The songwriter wished that he could do the same thing. A rainbow became a place of happiness. The beginning and the end of a rainbow always seem to be just over the next hill. People in Ireland believe that if you find the end of a rainbow, you just might find a pot of gold, too.

But rainbows are elusive, meaning they are always just beyond our reach. When we think we've come close to one, it suddenly springs ahead of us again. Suppose that we could really reach a rainbow. Would we fly above it in a plane and drop down with a parachute? Remember that rainbows are water droplets. How would the rainbow ever be able to support our weight? Would we just float through it and catch a glimpse of it as we go by?

But imagine the fun if we could land on one of those bands of color. Think of being on the longest and highest slide in the world. Do you believe we would end up in the pot of gold or in our own backyard? Even if we didn't get rich riding on a rainbow, the adventure would be worth all the trouble in getting there.

This is where you begin to write your story today. Using your imagination, think of a way for you to get to the top of a rainbow. Let the reader know what it feels like to step onto the surface. Let the reader know what you find there by the way you describe what you see and do. Also, tell how you get back down to earth.

Let's Think About It

A. Up To the Rainbow

1. How do you plan to reach the rainbow that you've spotted? Will it be easy? Will it be dangerous? Will anyone help you or go with you? Will you take supplies with you? What are they?
2. What do you feel as you get closer to the rainbow? Are you scared, excited, or worried? Why?
3. What do you see as you get close to the rainbow? Is it what you expected?

B. On the Surface

1. What does it feel like to step down onto the surface of the rainbow? Do your feet sink out of sight? What keeps you from falling through?
2. What do you see around you? Can you touch things? What do the colors look like up close? What do you see beneath you?
3. In the time you have to spend on the rainbow, what do you do?

Story Topic 44: Over the Rainbow, *continued*

C. The Return

1. How do you get back down to earth? How did it feel as you were traveling downward?
2. Where did you land? Was it a soft or hard landing? How does it feel to be back on the ground?
3. What was the best part of your adventure? If you had the chance, would you do this again? Is there anything you would do differently?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story, it may help you to actually draw some of the pictures of how you plan to get to the rainbow and back and what you expect to see there. If you think that this will help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about everything that is going to happen in this rainbow adventure, it's time to write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not really important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Everyone has a fear of something. Some people fear flying in airplanes or riding in elevators. Others fear heights or getting up in front of a group of strangers. Your little brother or sister might be afraid of creepy, crawly things like spiders and snakes. Some people faint at the sight of a bat. Spotting a black cat puts fear into some of the bravest hearts.

There are people who also fear what they can't see. They're afraid of things in dark corners. They think something might be hiding in the attic or down in the musty cellar. Shadows and strange sounds throw them into a panic.

Some fears are based on superstition. Black cats are supposed to bring bad luck if they cross your path. Toads are supposed to give you warts if you touch them. None of this is true, but people with superstitious fears really believe in such things.

What about you? When you go to bed at night, are you ever frightened? As you lie in your bed, do you ever wonder if something is in your closet? Or if something is hiding under your bed? Maybe you think about that little noise you just heard. But if you pull the covers up over your head and don't move a muscle, everything will be fine. Right?

This is where you begin to write your story today. Use your imagination. Bedtime has come and you slowly walk into your room. You check the closet. No problems in there. You snuggle under the covers. Then you hear a little noise. Let the reader know what it is like to lie there in bed feeling brave and a little bit uneasy at the same time. Could it be that the bed moved ever so slightly? Now what do you do? Let the reader feel what you're going through as you build up your nerve to peek under the bed. What do you find?

Let's Think About It

A. Bedtime

1. Is your bedroom upstairs or downstairs? What does your bedroom look like?
2. Is there a lot of stuff in your bedroom? What is in there?
3. Is your bedroom large or small? Do you have a night light? Does a hall light shine into your room?
4. What is your bed like? What size is it? Is it high up off the floor?
5. Is there room for something to hide under your bed? Do the covers on the bed touch the floor?
6. What kind of person are you? Are you timid and shy? Are you brave? Do people tell you that you have a very active imagination?

B. The Noise

1. What kind of noise did you think you heard? Is it loud or soft? Is it different from anything you've ever heard before? Does it seem familiar?

Story Topic 45: It Came From Beneath the Bed, *continued*

2. What do you do after you hear the noise? Do you pull the covers over your head? Do you scream? Do you talk to yourself?
3. Do you hear the noise more than once? How do you know where the noise is coming from? Do you feel the bed move? How can you be sure you didn't make the bed move?

C. The Peek

1. When do you decide to take a peek under the bed? How do you feel while doing this?
2. Does your heart start to beat a little faster? How fast? Are you starting to sweat? Are your arms and legs locked in place?
3. As you slowly work your way down to the floor, what's going through your mind? Does time seem to move quickly or slowly? Is your young life flashing before your eyes? What will you do if you really do see something under the bed?
4. When the moment finally arrives, what do you find beneath the bed? What is your reaction?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story, it may actually help you to draw some of the scenes that took place while you were in your bed. If you think that this might help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label what is happening in the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about everything that is going to happen in this hair-raising experience, write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Have you ever imagined what it would be like to be a king or a queen, a princess or a prince, and rule over a large and powerful kingdom? In years gone by, royalty had almost unlimited power over the places they controlled. Their decisions shaped the future success or failure of their people and their countries.

Kings and queens were usually adored by their subjects. But not in all cases. Sometimes their rule was unkind and cruel. In the fairy tales that we read, royalty had their share of adventures, too. Prince Charming attended royal balls most of the time. He was seeking a wife. The solution became simple. All he had to do was find the beautiful girl who lost the glass slipper. There was also the handsome young prince who searched for the girl of his dreams by riding for months around the countryside. He finally found her in a deep sleep near a cottage belonging to seven dwarfs. One kiss and instant happiness! And don't forget about the girl who kissed a frog. In doing this she undid an evil curse and turned the frog into a grateful prince.

Royalty could be found living in castles with many servants to attend to their wishes. The castle was usually located on the land that belonged to the royal family. But what if their kingdom was not on land? What if it was up in the clouds? Imagine if, somehow, magically, the clouds can hold up this kingdom and its people. Think of the adventure you would find there. However, what if something happens that begins to wear away this magical support? Who can save the day?

You guessed it. You can help save the kingdom in the clouds! You are going to write a story about how you (a prince or princess) save your kingdom from possible destruction. As you write your story, let the reader picture what your kingdom looks like and how things work way up there in the clouds. Let the reader know what the problem is. Let him feel what it is like for you to think up a plan that will save the kingdom and allow you, your family, and all the people of the kingdom to live happily ever after.

Let's Think About It

A. The Kingdom

1. Who are you in this kingdom? What do you normally do? What is your family like?
2. What is your kingdom like? Describe it. What is it called? If someone came to visit your kingdom, what strange things might he see? What things are the same as on earth?
3. How does the kingdom stay up in the clouds? How do people walk on the clouds? Do you need some sort of special transportation to travel in this kingdom?
4. What are the people of this kingdom called?

B. The Problem

1. What has happened to put the kingdom in danger? Does it have anything to do with the weather? Could a "cloudquake" cause the problem?
2. Why is it up to you to solve the problem? Where is your family? Do you have to solve this problem in a certain amount of time? Are you afraid? Why?

Story Topic 46: The Kingdom in the Clouds, *continued*

C. The Plan

1. How do you plan to solve the problem? Will you need special tools or supplies? How about help from others? Describe your plan step-by-step.

D. Success?

1. Does your plan succeed or fail? If it fails, what happens? If it succeeds, how are things better now that you have fixed the problem?
2. How do the king and queen feel about what you have done?
3. How do people treat you now that your plan has either succeeded or failed?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story, it may actually help you to draw some pictures of your kingdom and the things that happened while you were planning to save it. If you think that this might help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about everything that is going to happen as you try to save your kingdom in the clouds, it's time to write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Have you ever ridden in an elevator? Perhaps it was one that went to the top of a very tall building. Most skyscrapers have express elevators that zoom by floors in a matter of seconds.

The earliest elevators were invented in the countries of Greece and Egypt hundreds of years ago. These elevators were used to carry things, not people. They were made of simple ropes, pulleys and a wooden platform. Many years later elevators were powered with huge hydraulic jacks. Then someone thought of using steam. Today, electricity or hydraulics are used to run the elevators that carry freight or people.

Some elevators have many buttons. There are buttons for certain floors and for calling someone in an emergency. There are buttons to open and close the door when the elevator is standing still. But suppose there was a button in an elevator that had no numbers on it. All it had was a question mark. Would you be curious enough to push it?

Let's say that you are both curious and brave. You get on the elevator on the bottom floor of a very tall building. You are in no hurry to get to the 20th floor. That's where your dentist is located. Somehow the button with the question mark becomes a more exciting choice. You push it, and the elevator begins moving. You watch the floors go by on the number panel. You smile as the elevator zooms by floor number 20. This building has 30 floors. Suddenly you realize that the elevator has reached the 40th floor and it is still moving. Now what do you do?

This is where you continue the story. Let the reader feel what you feel as you watch the elevator continue upward. It hasn't stopped at any floor. Let the reader know what you do as you try to get the elevator to reverse itself. Does it reach a special floor before it switches direction? Is the question mark on the button more than just a choice?

Let's Think About It

A. The Choice

1. What does this elevator look like? Is it like any other elevator or is there something different about it?
2. Are you alone on this elevator? If not, who else is on it with you? What do they think when you make your choice of buttons?

B. Going Up!

1. What do you feel as the floor numbers roll by?
2. When do you realize that you might be in trouble? What do you do? Do you try the emergency button? Do you panic?
3. Since the building only has 30 floors, what did you think was going on?
4. Once you passed the 30th floor, did anything change? Were there new sights, sounds, and smells?

Story Topic 47: The Neverending Elevator, *continued*

C. Heading Back

1. What finally makes the elevator stop or head downward? Did it reach a certain floor? Did you get a chance to get off on this floor? What did you see?
2. Did you push the question mark button again? What happened? Was it easy or hard to figure out what to do?
3. What is the ride like heading down again? What are you thinking about? What do you feel as the floor numbers roll backwards? Are you nervous?

D. Down At Last!

1. What do you see as the elevator finally stops and the door opens? Are there people standing there? Who are these people and what do they say?
2. Do you tell someone in charge about what happened? What does the person in charge do or say?
3. What did you learn about this experience?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story, it may help you to actually draw some pictures of the things that happened on your strange elevator ride. If you think that this might help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about everything that will happen in this strange elevator, write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

If someone mentions the words *cute little pooch*, what do you see in your mind? Do you think of a cute little dog with bouncing feet and a wagging tail? Sometimes the way a word sounds helps us get a picture of what it means. Think of words like *whoosh*, *sizzling*, and *heebie jeebies*. But how about the word *gooch*? If you had a gooch, what would it be?

Perhaps the gooch is a team mascot. It could be smaller and cuddlier than the Chicago Bull's bull. Or maybe it's a fluffier version of the San Diego Padres' chicken.

Something that you wear or carry could be called a gooch. A roomy backpack might be known as the gooch. A belt or a special hat could also have that name.

The gooch could be a new kind of dance. When the gooch song is heard, everyone might do a line dance with fancy steps.

Gooch could be the kid who sits next to you in school. No one seems to remember his real name anymore. Maybe it is something like Thurston Zacharius Howell III. He probably has really curly hair and loves to tell jokes. Gooch fits his fun-loving personality.

These are just a few ideas. You can probably think of a lot more. Use your imagination and think about the sound of the word. Suppose you come home from school one day and see a mysterious package by your front door. Whatever is inside was sent to YOU by your zany Aunt Louise. You can't help but notice the words in large dark print on the side of the box — CONTENTS: THE GOOCH. What can it be?

This is where you begin writing your story. Let the reader feel the excitement or nervousness as you tear open the wrapper. Let the reader picture exactly what you find inside this package. Careful! Could it be alive?

Let's Think About It

A. The Package

1. What does the package look like? Is it heavy? Does it move? Can you pick it up? Does it rattle? Does it make any noise?
2. What are you feeling as you open the package?

B. The Gooch

1. What do you find inside the box? Is it alive? Is it something to wear? Will other people want to have one just like it?
2. Describe the Gooch fully. What does it look like? How big is it? What color is it? Does it make any sounds?
3. Will your parents let you keep the Gooch? Where will you keep it? How will you take care of it? Will you be able to take it to school for show-and-tell?

Story Topic 48: The Gooch, *continued*

C. The Thank-you

1. How do you thank your Aunt Louise for such a special gift? Do you write a note? Do you call her up? What will you tell her so that she knows her gift was special?
2. What one word could you use to describe the Gooch? Do you think that the Gooch is the only one of its kind in the world? What makes you think so?
3. Will you keep the Gooch forever? Will you someday give it to someone else?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story, it may help you to actually draw some pictures of the things that happened before and after you discovered what the Gooch was. If you think that this might help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about what the Gooch will be, write your story about receiving this highly unusual present. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not really important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

The word is out. You overhear one neighbor tell another neighbor that you are so responsible for your age. You did such a wonderful job while baby-sitting your neighbor's child for fifteen minutes while she ran to the post office. Responsible? Who ever told your neighbor that you were responsible in the first place? You're sure it was your mom. Only she would start an ugly rumor like that! Your one hope is that your friends haven't found out. What would they think? Your entire group is known for their fun attitude. Being responsible would be a heavy burden to bear. But, word on the street can travel quickly!

The job of baby-sitting has been around forever. Someone in the cave was probably the official baby-sitter when cave people did whatever they did to survive. Today's baby-sitter can be the nice lady down the street, the older teenager, or the more-than-willing grandparent. Day care centers are also set up to look after little ones.

What are baby-sitters like? They can be as strict as an army sergeant or as easygoing as a sailboat on a calm sea. Most baby-sitters are somewhere in between. Most of them are patient and always responsible.

The phone rings. Your mom tells someone that you will be happy to baby-sit for her. After all, she will be right there with you. The family is new in town. They'll pay ten dollars for three hours' work. That's a fortune! They'll bring Sam over tomorrow morning. His nickname is Trouble. Suddenly, ten dollars doesn't seem like enough.

The grownups arrive the next morning carrying a covered cage. How bad can this kid be? Your mom finally tells you. Trouble is not a child. Trouble is a . . .

This is where you continue the story. What exactly is Trouble? Trouble is not to spend the whole three hours inside his cage. Trouble must be let out for some exercise. And Trouble will need to live up to his name. Let the reader know what Trouble is like and how you manage to survive this three-hour job responsibility and EARN the ten dollars.

Let's Think About It

A. "Trouble"

1. What exactly is Trouble? How big is he? What does he look like?
2. How does Trouble act? Is he friendly? Is he playful? Does he have an attitude? If you have pets, how does he react to them?
3. Do you need to feed Trouble a special kind of food at a certain time? Why do you need to exercise him?

B. The "Trouble" in Trouble

1. Is there a difference between Trouble in the cage and Trouble out of the cage?
2. What's the first thing that Trouble does to get into trouble? How do you handle that? What is his reaction?
3. What are other ways that he gets into trouble? Do you get a little bit smarter each time about how to handle the situation? Do you become more patient? Does your mom help in any way?

Story Topic 49: The Baby-sitter, *continued*

C. A Job Well Done

1. When and how do you finally get Trouble on your side?
2. When Trouble is finally picked up, do you and your mom tell the family that you'll watch him again? What do you plan to do with the ten dollars?
3. What have you learned from this experience? Were you a responsible baby-sitter? Why do you think so?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story, it may help you to actually draw some pictures of what Trouble looks like and some of the problems you get into while caring for him. If you think that this might help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about everything that will happen on your baby-sitting adventure, it's time to write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Let's Read About It

Have you ever visited a place that had a waterfall as part of the scenery? I'm not talking about the kind of waterfall where birds happily splash in a three-level concrete structure. Natural waterfalls are found in some large streams and rivers. Over time, the force of the water wears away the soft rock or dirt layers. Water naturally runs from a high place, like a hard rock ledge, to a low place. The difference in height creates a downward flow of water that can be gentle or powerful.

The highest waterfall in the United States is Ribbon Falls in California. It is 1,612 feet high. The most famous one, Niagra Falls, is only 182 feet high. Angel Falls, in Venezuela, is the tallest waterfall in the world at 2,648 feet in height. Sometimes there can even be a group of waterfalls in the same area. Each one is a different height, so it creates a dazzling scene. Many times generators are built where waterfalls are located to make electricity for many people to use. However, many waterfalls are left alone in their natural settings for people to enjoy.

Perhaps someone has told you about his visit to a large waterfall. The sound of the tumbling water can be deafening. A small pool is sometimes created where the forceful water enters the lower part of the river. The powerful spray can be felt many feet away. Between the waterfall and the rock behind it is a space, sometimes several feet wide and deep. This inner space seems calm compared to the wild front view of the waterfall.

This is where you will begin to write your story today. You and some friends have hiked into a little-known mountain river valley. You are being pulled ever forward by the sound of a huge waterfall. Everyone agrees there is no turning back until your curiosity has been satisfied.

Put your imagination to work. This will not be a stroll in the park. You will deal with slippery rocks and boulders, whirling pools of water, and a noise that will keep you from hearing any conversation. Let the reader feel what it is like to climb into that special place behind the waterfall as you battle each obstacle. You will not leave until your goal has been reached.

Let's Think About It

A. The Hike

1. Why did you decide to take this hike? How many friends are going with you? What are your friends like?
2. Are you excited? What supplies do you have along with you? How long do you plan to be gone? Are you prepared for any emergency?
3. What is the weather like? What do you see and hear as you travel through the river valley? When do you hear the sound of the waterfall?
4. What does the waterfall sound like? Is it scary? Why don't you just turn around and go back home?

B. The Waterfall

1. What does the waterfall look like from a distance? How does it look as you get closer to it? How high is it? Is there more than one waterfall? Is it wide or narrow?
2. What is the area around the waterfall like? How would you describe it? Are there things such as rocks, trees, and tall river grass?
3. Is there any wildlife around the waterfall?
4. What is the noise like from up close? How do you and your friends communicate over the noise? What makes you try and get to the area behind the falls?
5. What do you think about as you begin to go behind the falls? How do you manage to climb over the rocks? What does the spray feel like? What do you see and hear? Are you soaking wet?

C. Success

1. What do you feel as you successfully stand right behind the falls? What do you see and hear? Are you relieved to be there?
2. Are all of you proud of your accomplishment? Did you learn anything from this experience? Do you feel more grown up?
3. How do you know when it is time to leave?

Let's See It Happen

Before you write your story, it may help you to actually draw some pictures of your hike to the waterfall and your journey behind it. If you think that this might help you to write a better story, use one of the storyboard papers for your drawings. Be sure to write the name of the story and to label the pictures.

Let's Write About It

Now that you have had a chance to think about everything that will take place on your journey behind the waterfall, it's time to write your story about it. Be sure that your story has a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The length of your story is not important. Try to spell all the words you use correctly. If you don't know how to spell a word, use a dictionary or ask for help. Also, make sure you are using proper sentences and placing your end marks correctly.



Student Writing Samples

A note on student writing samples: These stories are included essentially as the students have written them. They have been edited for spelling and grammar, but the content has remained virtually untouched.

This story is based on Topic #9 (pg. 51), “The Mighty Oak Tree.” This student worked from the storyboard illustrations included on the following page.

The Great Oak Tree

by Chance Hauser

Once there was an oak tree. It was the tallest tree in the state. Then one day I was flying my kite and it got stuck in the tree.

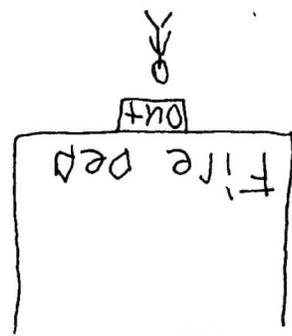
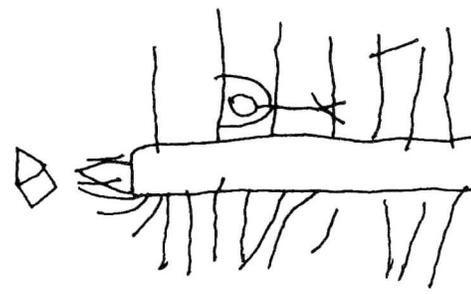
First, I went to the fire department to ask them if they would get my kite out of the tree, but they weren't there.

I started up the tree, but it was seventy FEET up in the tree. I started to climb on the branches a little ways out from the trunk because it was like stairs all the way to the top.

When I looked down, I was at least thirty feet up. Then I looked up and saw nothing but tree branches. I was almost at the top when I stepped on a branch. It broke. But luckily my hands were firmly on the next branch.

Finally, I got to the kite. I threw it down to the ground. But I made sure it hit the ground before I climbed down. But then climbing down is another story.

Name Chance Hauser Story Title The Great Oak Tree

<p>1</p> 	<p>2</p> 
<p>3</p> 	<p>4</p> 

This story is based on Topic #2 (pg. 37), "The Tennis Ball." This student worked from the storyboard illustrations included on the following page.

Finally Free

by Megan McDonald

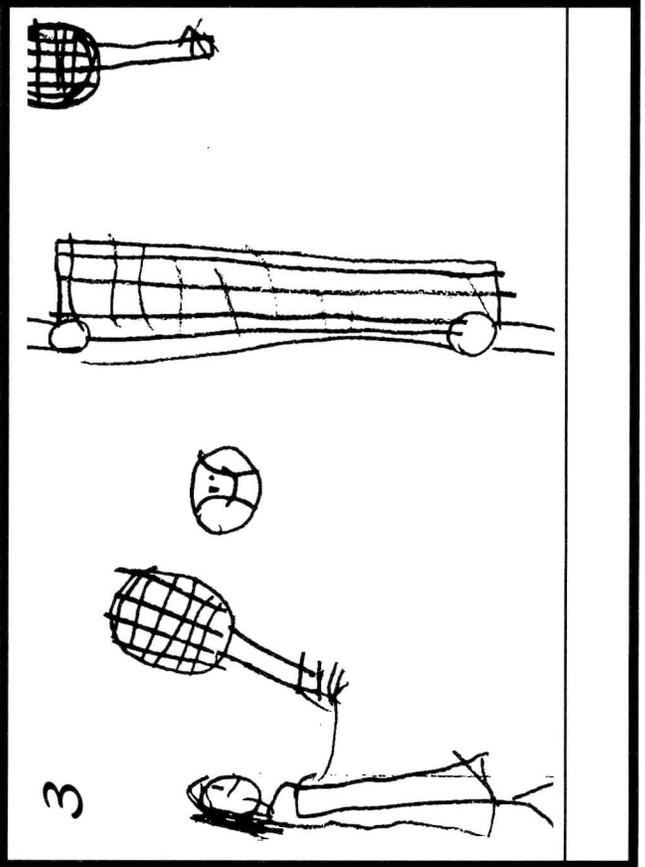
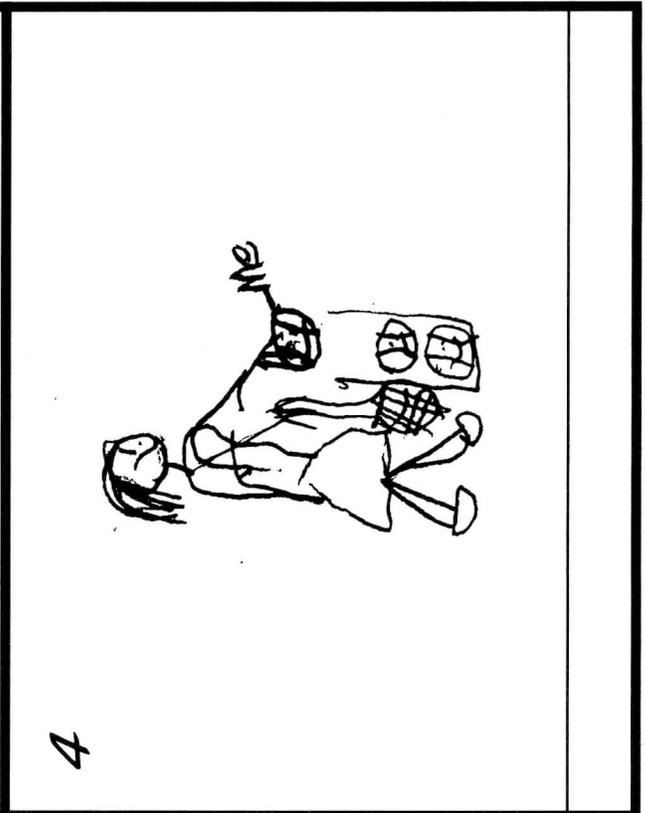
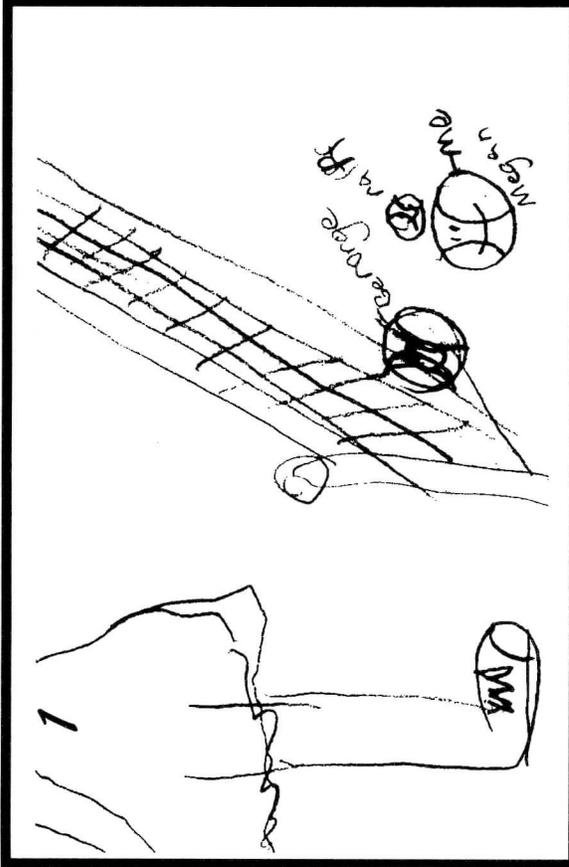
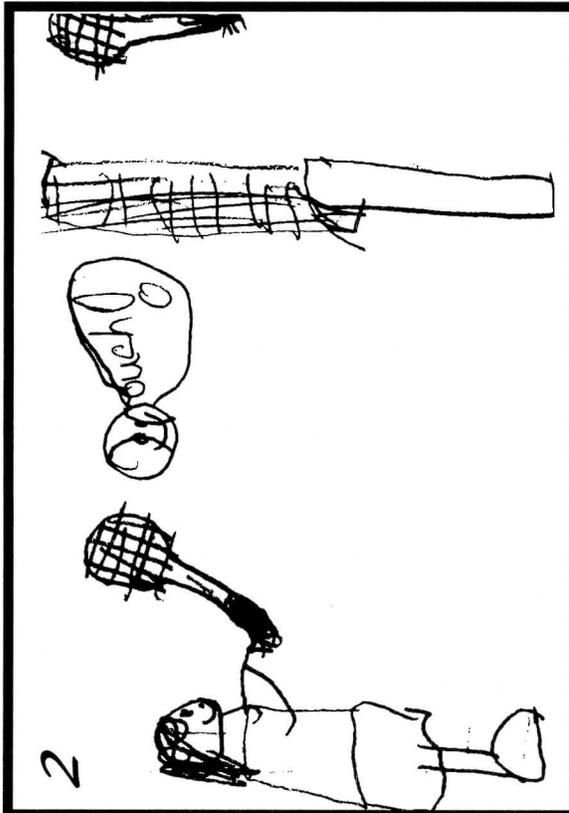
At last, free, I thought as I was dumped out on the court. Ralph and George (my can mates), were stunned, unlike me who was very much excited. As I was being picked up I saw everything. I could see trees and then I saw the court. I could see the net and the person across it.

It felt good to be picked up. Then the next thing I knew I was flying in the air. "Whap! Ouch!" I screamed as I was flying across the court. Then I heard Ralph and George laughing at me, but before I was able to respond, Whap!, I was flying in the other direction. However, I was still happy to be out of the can.

Being hit across the net wasn't so bad but it hurt when I bounced on the court or hit the racket face first, although it was fun flying in the air. Everything was a blur, I couldn't see anything except for the green court when I bounced and the racket coming straight at my face. All I could hear was Ralph and George laughing at me and the air whizzing by. Many times I was missed and hit the wall. When that happened, Ralph or George were used.

The women finally left the court. Ralph, George, and I were all lopsided and felt that way too. We didn't roll as nicely as we used to, but it was still fun. Hopefully tomorrow we would do it again. The ladies came back; we were put back in the can and took that strange ride again. Now everything was dark, but we were all happy to be used tennis balls.

Name Megan McDonald Story Title Finally Free



This story is based on Topic #15 (pg. 63), "The Sled Ride."

The Bump

by Wayne DeWitt

I like the winter. I live in a town called Wisdom in Montana. Most of the time there is a few feet of snow. Every day my brother Trent, my sister Suzanne, and I go sledding. There is one hill we like to go on all the time. We call it Wisdom Hill.

As usual, I hooked up the sled horse, Hammer. The sled isn't really big, but we have Hammer pull us up Wisdom Hill.

We unhooked Hammer and got the sled ready to go down the hill. Trent was the first one to go down. I rode Hammer down the hill to pick up the sled and go back up. Trent missed the big bump toward the bottom of the hill. (That is why we like going down the hill.) Suzanne was next. She hit the corner of the bump and flipped. She was all right. It was real funny. Finally it was my turn. I tried to line up the sled with the bump. I went down the hill fast. When I hit the bump I bounced up and landed on the sled again. I hit the bottom of the hill and rolled. It was so much fun.

This story is based on Topic #47 (pg. 127), "The Neverending Elevator."

The Neverending Elevator

by Aaron Principe

I was so happy that my mother was letting me go in the elevator by myself to the dentist. As the moving box zoomed upwards, I took pleasure observing the red velvet walls surrounding me. I studied the gold-plated panel with several mysterious buttons. There was one marked Emergency Brake. I thought it was fun to be alone in such a grand elevator. The button that fascinated me the most was the one with a large question mark on it. I pressed it, and to my disappointment, nothing happened.

Then I turned my attention to the panel that let me know what floor I was on. It read 30. I began to dread that my wonderful trip in the elevator was almost over. Suddenly, a jerk almost caused me to fall down. The elevator began to move upward very quickly. I watched with an open mouth as the panel read that I had just passed the fortieth story.

Immediately, I rushed over and pressed the emergency brake button. I waited about five seconds which seemed like hours. Scared, I frantically felt the red velvet walls while looking for any secret button. After searching for quite some time, my right hand felt something hard. I looked down but saw nothing but the red velvet wall. I touched it again, but this time I just felt the red velvet of the wall.

Once more I glanced at the panel that said what floors I was passing — 76, 77, 78, 79, 80. It was then that I realized I *must* find a way to stop this wild ride. And I needed to find that way soon.

I tried not to panic because if I did, I knew I would never have a chance to find out what to do. I began randomly pushing buttons, but none stopped the elevator. Frustrated, I gave up and leaned against the wall. Then it happened, I heard the grinding of gears and squeaking of wheels. With a quick jerk, the elevator began to go down.

I stayed as far away from that question mark button as I could. I never wanted to ever see it again. Finally, I reached the bottom floor. I took a deep sigh as the doors of the elevator opened and I slipped out. All was quiet, and it was dark. I thought this rather unusual, then realized that it was passed closing time. I was glad because no one would ever know what had happened. As I walked out the back door of the building, I thought about the lesson I had learned. Never again would I push unusual buttons in the elevator.

This story is based on Topic #39 (pg. 111), "Lost in a Labyrinth."

The Labyrinth

by Savannah Thompson

I don't remember much about the labyrinth except that it was cold, dark, and positively disgusting. The walls were covered in green slime and were ten feet tall. It started out as an innocent game of hide and seek . . .

"Brittany, let's go hide in Dead Man's Cave," Sophie said.

"I don't think we should," I told her.

"Come on, Brittany, don't be such a chicken!" Sophie said.

"Oh, Okay."

"Good, come on before Susan finishes counting."

"That'll take a while."

"Yeah, I know, but just to make sure, let's go in the back way."

When we reached the back entrance of the cave, Sophie said, "Hurry up, she's almost done counting."

"You go in first," I said. "I've never been in Dead Man's Cave."

"I have, and believe me, I don't want to go in again. As if the whole thing wasn't scary enough, there are all those scientists studying you when you come out. Oops!"

"What do you mean, scientists studying you?" I asked.

"Oh, nothing, I was just talking."

"You were not just talking. Tell me what you mean!"

"Well, you see, scientists want to see if mazes have the same effect on people as they do on rats. They want to compare your time in the maze to mine. Will you do it?"

I said I would.

As I entered the maze, my mind flew. What would the maze be like? I

stepped inside and began the adventure. I soon came to a fork in the path. I chose the left passageway. I walked for a while and came to a dead end. After about twelve dead ends, I finally saw a distant light. It was the exit, I thought to myself. I was wrong, it was just another passageway. I decided to follow it. "Who knows, it might lead me to the exit?" I said aloud. Suddenly there was a creaking sound. "What was that?" I said in a trembling voice. I rolled my eyes around so I could see on both sides of me. "Stop it, Brittany. It's just your imagination," I told myself. I walked another twenty yards and saw a light about forty feet ahead. I began running as fast as I could.

I stepped out of the cave and into the light. There, awaiting me, were three scientists in white lab coats. They were making notes on their clipboards. One of them walked up to me and said, "It took you approximately thirty minutes to get through the cave."

I was so relieved to get out of that maze. It was just like Sophie had said – it was the most terrifying thing of my life.

Sophie walked over to one of the scientists and volunteered us for another experiment.

"Oh no," I said, "Not again."

This story is based on Topic #1 (pg. 35), "The Race."

The Great Elephant Race

by Jonathan J. Hibbard

It was a hot summer day in Camp Verde, Arizona, the day of "The Great Elephant Race." In fact, I was on one of the elephant's ears as he raced through town. My name is Itchybod, and I am a flea that lives on my friend's ear.

My friend is an African elephant named Speedy. He was born in Zimbabwe and lives in the Hwange National Park. This is one of the last great elephant sanctuaries left in the world. Speedy weighs 4,500 pounds and is four years old. He got his name because he is the fastest elephant in Zimbabwe.

We have been together for the past two years. Speedy gives me the credit for helping him win the races because I whisper encouragement to him during the race. Really, I just start biting him and he gets annoyed and becomes frustrated and starts running faster and faster.

Speedy and I were really excited to be invited to participate in the Great Elephant Race. This race is sponsored by Planter's Peanuts once a year to celebrate National Peanut Day. Only the ten fastest elephants in the world are invited to this "earthshaking" event. Five Indian Elephants and five African Elephants compete for the title of World's Fastest Elephant in this race. Excitement filled the air on the day of the race. People from India, China, Africa, and other distant places packed the streets of Camp Verde. A life-size "Mr. Peanut" was walking around giving away peanuts. Vendors were everywhere selling "Mr. Peanut" dolls, balloons, key chains, suckers, T-shirts, and hats.

The race began at 10:00 A.M. The elephants and their jockeys were lined up at the starting line on Main Street in front of the old high school. This was a long course for elephants and the temperature of 100 degrees made it even tougher. (I was grateful to Speedy for the shade his big ears provided me later in the day.)

A judge explained the course to the jockeys, and the starter fired the shot that started the Great Elephant Race. Speedy was frightened by the shot and ran his heart out. We turned left at Circle K Convenience Store and then left on Seventh Street by the post office. That was a real killer hill. Speedy was

already breathing hard and struggling to get used to the hot asphalt under his feet. At the top of the hill we turned left onto Head Street.

Sweat started pouring down Speedy's ear, which was where I was at the time. For a moment I thought I was going to drown. I quickly crawled to the top part of Speedy's ear where I had a better view of the situation. I felt like I was on a roller coaster as we headed down the steep hill on Head Street back towards Main Street. Suddenly our jockey made a sharp left onto Second Street. It took me by surprise and I almost fell off Speedy's ear. Whew! That was a close one!

As we passed Ralston's Sporting Goods, Speedy started to pace himself. He was getting into a nice rhythm and I was beginning to enjoy the ride. We cut across Circle K's parking lot and headed down Montezuma Castle Highway. All the elephants began to slow down and were just walking for this stretch of the race until they approached Black Bridge. At this point the elephants had caught their second wind and began moving at a much faster pace again.

One of the elephants refused to cross the bridge but went down to the river instead. He filled his trunk with water and sprayed the water up on the bridge. We were on the bridge at that moment and the coolness of the water felt refreshing. It really helped cool us off. The poor jockey had a terrible time trying to get his hot, tired elephant back on the course.

Speedy found a good pace and was in first place as we approached Camp Verde High School. I was getting very hot by this time and was relieved that the sprinklers were on at the high school lawn. Our jockey was kind enough to let us take a detour through the water. (We really appreciated it and felt badly about the big footprints we left in the grass!)

Refreshed and revived, Speedy continued on this grueling course. The Arizona sun and lack of shade was taking its toll on both of us. I decided I had to crawl back under Speedy's big ear or I was going to get the sunburn of my life. When I crawled back into his ear it tickled Speedy and he took off! He didn't slow down until we approached the I-17 ramp.

I-17 was closed because of the race so we didn't have to dodge any semi-trucks. Instead of walking on the pavement, Speedy walked down the median to give his sore feet a rest. At this point we had a quarter mile lead. Several elephants had already dropped out of the race because they could not take the extreme desert heat.

As we approached the second overpass, Speedy began to pick up speed. He was running faster than I had ever seen him run in Africa. When we got to the ramp by McDonald's, Speedy walked carefully across the bridge so as not to

cause the bridge to crack. We had heard they had recently repaired this bridge and did not want to cause any damage to this newly repaired bridge.

On the last stretch of the race I whispered to Speedy, "We came this far, we have to finish the race – running." Speedy then began to haul all the way to the finish line. As we approached the finish line, people began to cheer. Speedy was excited, I could feel it and Speedy could feel that I was excited too.

I kept climbing up his enormous ear until I got to the top of his head so I would have the best view possible. Of course when I was doing this it was tickling and itching Speedy and it made him run even faster. The crowd was going "nuts" over the new Planter's Peanut Great Elephant Race champion.

As we crossed the finish line and broke the tape, the people began throwing peanuts into the air. Speedy deserved them all, but first he wanted his hard-earned meal and about fifty gallons of water! The judges announced that he had set a new world's record for the fastest elephant ever. The local Marshall's office had clocked Speedy's top speed at 10 mph!

The grand prize was a lifetime supply of Planter's Peanuts for Speedy, and the jockey received a trophy and a medal, and I received the ride of my life!

Storyboard 1

Name _____
Story Title _____

Storyboard 2

Name _____
Story Title _____

Storyboard 3

Story Title _____

Name _____

The storyboard is a large rectangular area divided into four sections by horizontal lines. The top section is a large empty box. Below it is a narrow horizontal strip. The bottom section is another large empty box. At the very bottom is another narrow horizontal strip. The entire grid is enclosed in a thick black border.