

6

Ways to Explore Story Elements With Your Students

In the book *Story Frames for Teaching Literacy*, Carolee Dean reveals how to enhance student learning by teaching 12 key story elements, from the setup of the hero's Ordinary World through the Final Reward at the end. Here are some ideas for exploring story elements with your students.



1

Analyze a picture book.

Read a picture book to your class, and then go back and talk about each story element as it arises. This is an effective exercise for students of all ages: Picture books are short, so the entire story can be told and analyzed in one session. Have your students create a storyboard based on the picture book, incorporating all 12 story elements.



2

Have a movie discussion.

Encourage students to use the story elements to discuss the plots of movies they have seen. Movie clubs may be organized around this idea and movie reviews may be written or filmed. Not only will this reinforce the story elements, it will also help with social and communication skills; the ability to talk with peers about movies is an important interpersonal skill.



3

Explore story downtime.

Students are typically good at creating and identifying action in stories, but much can be gained from exploring what happens during the quieter moments. Start a discussion focused on exploring the downtime of a story, which is when planning, reflection, and internal responses occur. By using concrete examples with students, they may more easily understand these abstract concepts.

See more strategies 

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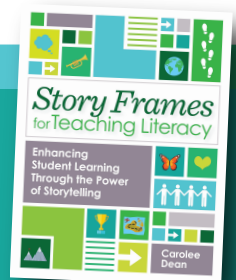
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6

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Generate story ideas.

Oral language precedes written language and provides a foundation for writing (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 2001), so get students talking about story ideas before you ask them to put their thoughts down on paper. Offer activities designed to generate a large number of ideas before you ask a student to pick one to write about.



5

Help students who get stuck.

When students say they don't know what to write or get stuck at a certain point in their story, have them refer back to the 12 story elements. Ask them to identify where they are in their own story and offer suggestions for what story element might come next.



6

Create a collaborative story.

Students often benefit from writing a collaborative story before attempting to write a story on their own. Guide a group activity that lets your students brainstorm a story together (there are some great sample activities in *Story Frames for Teaching Literacy*).

For complete guidance on how to teach the 12 story elements—plus more than 35 adaptable lesson plans—order your copy of *Story Frames for Teaching Literacy*!

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