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Choose Your Own Adventure Publishing Fieldtrip **Pre- and Post-Visit Materials for Educators**

Introduction to the Fieldtrip

Thanks so much for signing up for a field trip with 826 Seattle! Our mission: inspire your students to create stories as a team which will hopefully build their confidence in writing their own stories at school and at home.

Telling stories is an essential part of being human. Stories help us learn more about ourselves, our culture, our age, and other cultures by experiencing the thoughts and actions of characters in a story. In this fieldtrip, young people will embark on a storytelling journey that is guided by originality, spontaneity and sheer imagination. After one and a half hours of devising characters, compelling settings, action packed twists and embroiling problems, the journey culminates in a personalized bound book.

And did we mention...your class will have a darn good time. Our goal is for every one of your students to walk away from the field trip with a bound book under his or her arm and a sense of being a real writer.

Pre-Visit Discussion and Activities

Read a Choose Your Own Adventure

Read a CYOA book to familiarize students with the genre, for example Edward Packard's books such as The Cave of Time and Sugarcane Island. Another favorite CYOA author is R.A. Montgomery.

Because our fieldtrip is based on the combination of storytelling and collaborative writing, it's important for all students to be familiar with the elements of stories: character, plot/conflict, ending/resolution, and setting. Here are some tips to help your students get ready for the trip:

Setting

Setting is one possible starting point for writing in our fieldtrip.

- Ask students to write a story using the following sentences: The night was very, very hot—so hot that stray cats stepped lightly on the city sidewalks to avoid burning their feet. In the distance, a siren cut through late-night quiet of the city, racing its way to _____."

- Can students start a story they've written with this paragraph and make it work? How does this influence a story? How does a setting change the direction of their story? Does a beginning like this lend itself to a comedy or a dramatic story?

Plot/Conflict

Just so we're on the same page, for us conflict drives the plot of any fiction-based story. To illustrate the importance of conflict, here's some advice that will help your students understand it.

- Have two students "act" out a two-person scene in which there is no conflict, or, essentially, nothing happens. Tell the students that they will pretend they are friends who have just met up after returning from their summer vacation.

A: I went to Disneyland in July.
 B: That's nice. We went there also. We went on a ride called the Matterhorn.
 A: That's neat.

- At the end of this activity ask students in the audience if they found the scene interesting? (They should say no.) So, what's missing from the scene? If nothing is suggested, tell them that conflict is missing.
- Have students redo the activity. This time adding conflict.

A: I went to Disneyland in July.
 B: Like who hasn't been to Disneyland? Disneyland is boring. Everybody goes there. I went to Tasmania.
 A: Oh, Tasmania is such a long plane ride. What a waste of money!

- Guide students in talking about why this story is more interesting. It sets up a conflict. Conflict, in fiction, makes stories very compelling and is a very important aspect of writing stories.

Ending/Resolution

"...and they all lived happily ever after."

- Choose three stories that the whole class will know—fairy tales or something the students have read in class. Divide the class into groups of two or three and ask each group to change the ending of each story. Encourage students to invent original endings that will stay with the reader in a way that "and they all lived happily ever after" does not.

Roles of the Fieldtrip

Familiarize your students with the following words, as we use them at 826 Seattle:

Storyteller – an experienced and crafty person who paints images through words to tell a story. At 826 Seattle, students become storytellers with the help of a talented leader.

Scribe - a person who writes ideas down.

On the Day of Your Field Trip At 826 Seattle

From the moment students enter 826 Seattle, volunteers help young people navigate through the 2-hour writing experience. During the fieldtrip, teachers are asked to help with any troublesome class behavior since you know the students better than we do. Chaperones are more than welcome to attend, but we do encourage you to limit the number of chaperones attending to a maximum of four people. During the individual writing time teachers and chaperones are encouraged to join our volunteers and help students with their writing.

Each student will receive a copy of the class book, along with an extra copy of the book for you, the teacher.

Post Visit Discussion and Activity

When you return to the classroom, take advantage of the enthusiasm your students develop for writing stories and publishing them. What makes the Choose Your Own Adventure field trip unique is that students will have several pages to write once they return back to school. We encourage you to your students with the opportunity to finish their stories. Here are a few more suggestions to make keep the stories alive.

1. SHOWCASE

- Have your students read their stories to a public audience: to other grades, the school principal, the lunchroom attendants, etc.
- Host storytime at your school's Literacy Night or Family Night showcasing students' work.
- Each of your students will be working in a team lead by one of our 826 Seattle volunteers. It would be great if your students could each write a letter to one of their volunteer leaders thanking him or her (we want to keep them happy and volunteering!) as well as perhaps a critique of the group story. In thinking about the story, what was the best most compelling part, what changes might the student suggest in hindsight, etc.

2. CREATE A SERIES OR SPINOFF

Have your students write a new story detailing another adventure of the main character(s). You could compile these stories together to make a series based around the character. Another idea is asking your students to write a story showcasing one of the *secondary* characters of the fieldtrip story.

3. WRITE COMIC BOOKS

Translating the story to a visual format allows the students to focus on the pace and tone of the story. This can be easily done by drawing a grid with the chosen number of boxes and asking students to fill them in with the story. Because of the space limitations, students will learn to choose their words carefully and economically.