



826
SEATTLE

www.826seattle.org

The Space Adventure Comic Book Field trip **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: to encourage your students to create stories as a team, which will hopefully inspire them to continue 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, and our age by experiencing the thoughts and actions of characters in a story. In this field trip, young people will embark on a storytelling journey that is guided by originality, spontaneity and sheer imagination. After two 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

Because our fieldtrip is based on the combination of storytelling and collaborative writing, it's important for all students to be familiar with good writing habits. All good comic book writers use dialogue, descriptions, thinking and action to tell their story. Here are some tips to help your students get ready for the trip:

Dialogue

When writing a comic book, it's important to remember that characters say things to move the story forward. To illustrate our point, here's an activity that will help your students understand the importance of good dialogue.

- Have two students “act” out a two-person scene in which the dialogue does nothing to move the story forward. Essentially, nothing happens. Tell the students that they will pretend to be friends who have just met up after 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 the dialogue was interesting. (They should say no.) So, what’s wrong with it? If nothing is suggested, tell them that the dialogue didn’t help move the story forward.
- Have students redo the activity. This time adding information to their dialogue that will add something to the plot.

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 dialogue is more interesting. Good dialogue can tell us more about the character by the words they choose and the way they talk to other characters. Good dialogue can also tell us about the characters’ relationship and, as shown above, can even help introduce the conflict!

Description

When creating a comic book, the artist includes details in their drawings that help tell the story.

- Ask students to place a character in an extremely hot and extremely cold environment. What visual clues might they use to convey this?

Thinking

In comic books, thought bubbles are used to show what the character is thinking—a great trick when what they’re thinking is different from what they are saying!

- Ask students to create a thought bubble that shows the character is thinking something different than what they are doing or saying.

Actions

A comic book artist draws characters that do things, both big, such as running, standing, dancing, and small, such as creating appropriate facial expressions to convey different emotions, to tell the story.

- Ask students to draw the same face several times, but with different facial expressions to show the following emotions: Angry, Sad, Joyful, Sneaky.

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. At the end of your time here, 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. Often times,

Here are a few 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.