



826
SEATTLE

www.826seattle.org

Mr. Geoduck 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

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 and activities to help your students get ready for the trip.

Character

Character is one starting point for writing in our fieldtrips. So let's begin by envisioning our character and giving him or her a voice.

- Have students break into small groups. Provide the same photograph to each group and ask them the following questions:

What is his or her name?

Who is this character?

What is special or unique about him/her?

Where is s/he?

How does s/he feel about being there? Why?

What does the character want, need or dream about?

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- After answering the questions and providing details for the photograph, have students write a letter as if they were each the character, asking and making a case for something they want. Encourage students to think of the words the character will use to speak.

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Setting

- 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 continue this story and make it work? How does this first paragraph influence a story? How does the setting change the direction of their story? Does a beginning like this lend itself to a comedy or a dramatic story?

Plot/Conflict

- 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.

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- 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 "... they all lived happily ever after" does not.

On the Day of Your Field Trip To 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 that you 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 Activities

When you return to the classroom, take advantage of the enthusiasm your students have developed for writing and publishing stories. Here are a few suggestions to 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' works.

2. WRITE A SEQUEL

Write a sequel to the story using the same elements of storytelling: character development, setting, rising action, cliffhanger, and the ending. In the sequel you may want to incorporate a new character to the story. Students may want to resurrect an old villain.

3. CREATE PUPPETS

You can invite students to create a puppet of one of their characters. In doing this, they can explore the details of the character's persona.

4. 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.