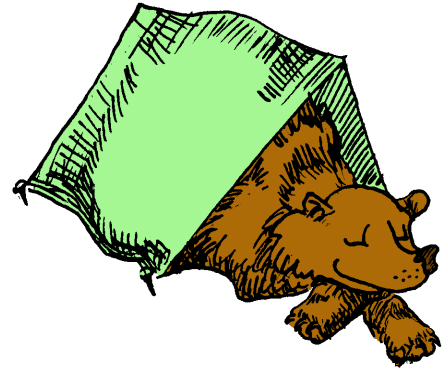


A Bear in the Campsite?!

A Workshop in Conflict & Plot Development



Introduction:

Nobody wants conflict in their lives, but boy do we *love* conflict in our books, movies, TV shows, and soap operas! This is because conflict (be it the super villain threatening the world or the cute boy in math class who just doesn't know that the protagonist exists) is essential to plot development. This workshop introduces students to the fundamentals of storytelling by engaging with conflict. A portion of this workshop will be spent playing a fun word-association game as a class. This activity will produce dozens of conflicting word associations like "Beach" and "Shark" or "Breakfast table" and "Poison". For the remainder of the class, alone or in small groups, students will brainstorm simple plots using the word pairings of their choice. Maybe a family trip to the beach gets scary when a lifeguard saves your older sister from shark-infested waters? Maybe a waiter is secretly a spy trying to poison the queen's cup of English breakfast tea? Teachers may choose to assign homework or extra credit to motivate students to write a short story using their plots.

Vocabulary Words:

Begin the workshop by explaining conflict and its relation to storytelling and plot. Engage students by telling a simple story and seeing if they can recognize the conflict, or use examples from films and books they identify with.

Materials Needed:

- Slips of paper with places written on them. These places should provoke the imagination as settings for stories. For instance: the beach, a castle, the battlefield, the playground, the classroom, the principal's office, the jungle, etc.
- A hat or bowl to place the papers in.

How to play the game:

- 1) Allow students to form small groups of 3-4.
- 2) Have each group select a slip of paper from a bowl or hat.
- 3) Allow the students to read their slip of paper, containing a setting/place, aloud. (Example: Campsite)
- 4) Prompt students to discuss the *worst* thing that may come to mind in that setting. Allow creativity. (Example: a bear gets into the campsite)
- 5) Ask groups to choose their favorite scenario and write their ideas on the board. (Example: Campsite & Bear. Beach & Shark. Restaurant & Poison.)
- 6) After a few rounds, allow students to choose their favorite conflicting word pairing and allow them to brainstorm the beginnings of their own original stories.

Common Core Learning Objectives:

1. Knowledge – Understand the relationship between conflict, plot development, and storytelling.
2. Reflection – Reflect upon how conflict drives the stories students know and love.
3. Execution – Practice developing their own plots and expressing their creativity in a collaborative learning environment.