



## **ART BRIDGES: Lesson Plans for Enrichment, Growth and Healing**

### **Writing Short Stories as a Group in One Session**

**A Copyright Lesson Re-Posted With Permission by  
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**Based on the Copyrighted Lesson Plan  
“Write a Short Story in One Class!”**

**As posted by Kim Collier, November, 2011**

**<http://teachers.net/lessons/posts/942.html>**

#### **Objectives:**

1. To introduce the students to the elements and parts of a short story
2. To use creative writing skills as a group to write short stories in one class period

#### **Audiences:**

This lesson will work well for adults down to seventh graders with a focus on reading and writing.

#### **Supplies/Materials:**

- Writing materials—pens, pencils, paper
- List of topics printed on individual sheets of paper
- Watch or some timing device

### Notes from Kimberly:

Many students are terrified by the thought of writing one paragraph, let alone an entire short story. This lesson offers a pressure-free and fun introduction to the elements of short story writing (introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution). I use it with my freshmen and sophomores, but it can be applied for any grade/level 7<sup>th</sup> grade on up. The finished products are absolutely amazing! I use them as the basis for additional lessons on grammar, theme, setting, tone, perspective, and characterization.

With this lesson, students will create a short story chain. They will each write for five minutes on a selected topic. When time is called, they will stop writing no matter where they are (yes, even if it is mid-sentence!) and pass their papers to the person behind them. (The person in the last seat of each row will pass their paper to the person in the first seat.) This continues until all students have had a chance to write one element of a short story. (Because of absences, some students might write twice.)

This activity takes place for 35 minutes with students switching papers every five minutes. (They have one to two minutes to read the developing story before they start writing). At the beginning of each writing session, tell the students which part of the story they are responsible for (i.e., introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution).

### Class Instruction:

1. Before class begins, you will need to create 5 or 6 story topics. I usually create a wide variety to choose from, such as: Aliens Invade Earth, Murder in the Mall, Stranded on a Desert Island, and Forbidden Love.
2. Have the first person from each row come up to your desk and choose a topic. What they choose is the topic the entire row will be writing on. I usually have my sheets folded so they have no idea what they will be getting.
3. Explain to the students the idea of a short story chain. There will be some confusion at first, but they will quickly catch on.
4. Introduction (5 minutes). Have every student write an introduction in the first five minutes based on the topic chosen for their row.

5. Once the introductions have been written, ask the students to pass their papers back one person (or back up to the front of the row from the back of the row).
6. After switching papers, allow two minutes for the students to read what has been written to see what has been developed so far in this story.
7. Now allow the students five minutes of writing time to add “Rising Action” to the sheet/story that has been passed to them.
8. Switch sheets again and allow two minutes to read what has been written on the story so far. Now allow five minutes of writing to add the element of “Climax” to each story.
9. Switch and allow two to three minutes to read over the story. Now allow five minutes of writing time to add “Falling Action” to the story.
10. Switch and allow two to three minutes to read the story and then five minutes of writing time to finish the story with the “Conclusion/Resolution”.

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### At the Conclusion of the Class:

At the conclusion of the class, gather the students together in each row and ask them to take turns reading aloud the stories they have written together.

### Learning Opportunity (from Hildegard):

Following are elements of a short story:

- **Character:** The person (object, animal, etc.) who takes part in the action of the story
- **Setting:** The time and location in which the story takes place
- **Plot:** A series of events and character actions that relate to the central conflict; a sequence of events in the story which includes a beginning, middle and end
- **Conflict:** The opposition of forces which ties one incident to another and makes the plot move. The main character is usually on one side of the conflict.
- **Theme:** The central idea of belief in the short story. The title of the short story usually points to the theme of the story.

Parts of a short story:

- **Introduction:** The beginning of the story where the character(s) and the story setting are revealed.
- **Rising Action:** Where the events of the story become complicated and the conflict in the story is revealed. This is where the series of action (or complications) sets up the conflict for the main character of the story. Tension builds and the story works up to the climax.
- **Climax:** The highest point of interest and turning point of the story. This is where the reader wonders what will happen next and questions whether the conflict will be resolved or not—the most exciting part of the story.
- **Falling Action:** The events and complications begin to resolve themselves. Sometimes the falling action is almost non-existent because the conclusion occurs immediately after the climax.
- **Resolution:** The final outcome or untangling of events in the story.

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