

Children's Story Assignment Harrigan

This assignment requires that students work in groups. It is an introduction to understanding plot, characters, point of view, and audience through the use of children's stories.

What you will do: In a group of **no more than three members**, pick and agree on a young child's book with fewer than 20 pages, one written for a child younger than age 8. The story must have action that takes place over time. A story with a lesson for is best. Read the book in your group and discuss the story and the characters.

1. Read the book, then group members together answer the following questions orally.

- A. Where is the setting? ("Setting" is where and when the story takes place.)
- B. Who are the main characters? What special personality traits does each one have?
- C. What is the main character's problem?
- D. What makes the character's problem difficult or frustrating to solve?
- E. What is the climax (highest tension point) of the story?
- F. How is the problem resolved?
- G. What is the lesson a child would learn from this book?
- H. Review, in order, the most important parts of the story, leaving out unimportant parts.
- I. Could this story be made into a story with a lesson for adults? (The "audience" is who the author thinks of as her/his readers.)
- J. If you could design the cover of an adult novel of this story, what would it look like?
- K. Discuss how the story would be different if told by the villain in the story. (This is called the "point-of-view"—the way a particular person views the story.)

2. Group members together discuss and draw a plot line. Plot lines have five parts—be sure to label each part (they are listed below):

***Introduction:** Information about characters and the setting—the things you learn at the beginning.

***Rising Action:** Each event is listed in sequence.

***Climax:** The point of highest tension and the turning point of the story. On the plot line this is marked at the top and center of the mountain-like diagram.

***Falling Action:** The events, in sequence, that occur after the Climax. These events begin to resolve the conflict(s) that were introduced earlier.

***Resolution:** The ending of the story and the lesson learned

3. Make a colorful poster-sized advertisement as if the story were written in an adult version or from the “bad-guy’s” point of view. It may be a movie poster and the story may have a new, name.

4. Oral Presentation: (Rehearse this together in advance!)

*Read the book to the class in no more than 10 minutes. You may need to summarize parts, instead of actually reading them, to meet this time limit.

*Group members will show and explain the plot line.

*Show the poster and explain how the story might be changed for an adult audience.

Grading: This assignment will be evaluated by students—your peers, but the final grade will be assigned by the instructor. Each student must participate equally in the presentation (doing their special part--reading, poster, or plot line); all should have participated in the earlier reading and discussion of the plot and the poster before the presentation.