

6G: Beginning Story Writing

In this unit, students get to practice their creative writing skills, learning the elements of storytelling and character development, and the importance of vivid language. Students gain a sense of ownership over their writing as they experiment with the impact of their authorial choices on sentences, language, character traits, and plot twist. As students consider how to use these elements to create a story, they also gain tools to help them effectively and incisively analyze a piece of literature.

Students begin with creating a character, observing and recording details, and writing about their character in mundane situations to make them nuanced and believable. This situational setting allows students to create a secondary character for their own story and develop dialogue. After some explicit instruction about the structure of a story, students pull all their skills together to write a story and practice the most important part of creative writing—revision.

What my student will do/learn:

- Students work to create a believable character for their short story, getting to know their character by writing about their actions and internal thoughts in various situations.
- Students review the shape of a story and apply understanding of plot elements to their own writing.
- Students balance dialogue with narration and punctuate dialogue properly.
- Students revise, paying particular attention to dialogue and its formatting as well as its balance with narration.
- Students edit their paper, paying particular attention to conventions and transitions, and create a final copy.

Here are some conversation starters that you can use during this unit to promote discussion and encourage continued learning with your student.

1. Describe your character. What do you imagine they look like? How would you describe their personality?
2. What is the setting of your story? In what ways does this setting make sense for your character? How did the setting help reveal more about your character's personality?
3. What advice about the use of dialogue would you give to someone writing a short story?
4. Imagine I'm a movie executive or major publisher. Read me the most exciting or important scene in your story that you think will convince me that this is the next big blockbuster film or bestselling novel. (Provide feedback to your student by finding something in their story that you can respond to as a reader. For example, "I liked when you described the setting as 'darker than a cave' because I can picture how dark a cave would be.")
5. What worked well for you in this writing process? What might you do differently the next time you craft a short story?