

## ***Marsha Waldman – ELA Lesson Plan***

### **Fiction: Finding Stories...Telling Stories**

#### **Overview**

In this series of activities, a photograph is analyzed in search of a story idea. Students describe the setting and characters, then imagine a problem the characters are facing in order to develop a plot. Working with partners or in small teams, the students use dialogue to advance the plot. They publish their stories and celebrate by reading them aloud.

#### **Rationale**

This lesson was designed for a highly diverse group of students, many of whom had little experience or inclination for writing fiction. The picture served as a story starter and a means for reviewing the core elements of fiction. Using dialogue as the primary means of telling the story helped the students understand literary elements such as voice, tone, and point of view. The students were motivated by working with partners and it served to support the students with more limited English skills.



#### **Student Objectives**

Students will:

- Analyze a photograph in terms of setting, characters, and plot.
- Create a conflict for the story.
- Write dialogue that reveals the conflict and a resolution.
- Use the proper mechanics for publishing dialogue.
- Read stories aloud, sharing them with classmates.

#### **Instructional Plan**

##### **Resources**

- Overhead projection of photograph
- Copies of photograph
- Copies of “It Was A Year Ago” from **The World’s Shortest Stories** edited by Steve Moss
- Writing materials
- Computers for word processing

## Preparation

- Prepare copies and overhead of photograph and “It Was A Year Ago”
- Reserve computer lab

## Instruction and Activities

### Session One

1. Review the terms setting, character and plot
2. Display the photograph and provide students with copies
3. Ask students to analyze the photograph, identifying details about the two characters and the time and place depicted. Write their comments on a chart and ask students to put their notes on the photo handout.
4. Discuss the possible reasons these characters might find themselves in this setting.
5. Have students form pairs or small groups.
6. Read descriptions of television shows from a TV guide, explaining that these provide a quick synopsis of the plot.
7. Student pairs work together to create a plot synopsis for a story based on the photograph.

### Session Two

1. Distribute and read the story “It Was A Year Ago”
2. Discuss the way in which the dialogue is used to convey the events that took place in the story and the emotions of the character.
3. Discuss the point of view of the story.
4. Student pairs work together to draft a story, making extensive use of dialogue. Teacher consults with the students as needed.

### Session Three

1. In computer lab, display a transcript of the story “It Was A Year Ago” with punctuation marks highlighted. Review the rules for punctuation in dialogue.
2. Reveal the document’s formatting marks and explain that each time a person speaks, it is necessary to start a new paragraph and indent.
3. As student teams type their stories, the teacher consults with students about edits and revisions.

### Session Four

1. To celebrate their work, student pairs or teams read their stories aloud. Different team members play the roles of the two characters.
2. Classmates make positive comments about the stories being read.

## **Student Assessment/Reflections**

A rubric with a scale of 1 to 4 will be used to assess the work, based on the following:

- Plot reflects the story starter photograph and includes a coherent conflict
- Dialogue is used to advance the plot and is unique to each character
- Mechanics
- Team cooperation

## **NY State ELA Standards**

Standard 2: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.

- Read silently and aloud from a variety of genres, authors, and themes
- Interpret characters, plot, setting, theme, and dialogue, using evidence from the text
- Identify the author's point of view, such as first-person narrator and omniscient narrator
- Recognize how the author's use of language creates images or feelings
- Compare motives of characters, causes of events, and importance of setting in literature to people, events, and places in own lives
- Identify social and cultural contexts and other characteristics of the time period in order to enhance understanding and appreciation of text