

Craft Collections: What Teachers Need to Know for Intermediate Writers

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Writing Workshop

- 60 minute daily block of writing time
- Format:
 - Minilesson (5-15 minutes) (Procedures, Craft, Conventions)
 - Independent writing (30-40 minutes)
 - Conferring with individuals
 - Small group guided writing
 - Group Conference (10-15 minutes)

Writing Workshop

Solid lines represent core elements and dashed lines represent optional elements

Mini-lesson (Whole group)

Frequency: Daily brief, powerful, whole group demonstrations about how writing works.
Teacher role: Teachers determine focus and attempt to connect minilessons so that they build upon one another. Teachers reinforce and support minilessons through guided writing, independent writing, and independent conferences. Minilesson topics include: specific focus on one of the criteria from the writing rubrics; procedures for writing workshop; conventions of writing; or lessons about writing craft. Teachers often use read aloud novels/picture books or shared reading selections as a basis for minilessons.
Student role: Students listen to and participate in minilessons. They may be asked to respond to minilesson work in independent or guided writing.

Independent Writing (Individual)

Frequency: Daily unless engaged in guided writing. Independent writing happens simultaneously with guided writing, conferencing or investigations.
Teacher role: Teacher monitors independent writing through status of the class, guided writing notes, observation or conferencing.
Student role: Students write on self-selected topics, teacher directed topics, or investigation topics. Students maintain a writing folder or writer's notebook.

Guided Writing (Small group)

Frequency: Guided writing happens as teachers observe the need to bring a small group together to reinforce some aspect of writing.

Teacher role:
Teacher meets with small groups of 6-8 students to teach and give feedback to group/individuals. Feedback usually reflects current or previous minilesson work. Teacher keeps anecdotal notes which count as conferences for these children.

Student role:
Students meet with teacher in guided writing groups. Children might focus on a teacher directed topic, investigation topic or individual choice during guided writing.

OR

Conferencing (Individual)

Frequency: Conferencing happens daily, whenever guided writing is not happening.

Teacher role:
Teacher conferences with students to give feedback on writing, collect data, and to teach specific elements of writing/spelling. Feedback usually reflects current or previous minilesson work. Conferencing is used primarily with children not currently meeting in guided writing groups.

Student role:
Students meet individually with the teacher in conferences to share written pieces that serve as a basis for assessment and instruction.

OR

Investigations (Whole group, small group or individual)

Frequency: Investigations happen as part of unit studies from content area or as directed by teacher or as selected by individuals. They may last as long as several days or several weeks.

Teacher role:
Teacher confers with individuals or groups about investigation topics and progress. Minilessons might center on how to write about a particular topic/theme.

Student role:
Students research and write about investigation topics and usually produce some product that involves writing that is shared with the whole group.

Group Sharing (Whole group)

Frequency: Daily time for individuals to receive whole group feedback on writing pieces that are completed or that are in process.
Teacher role: Teacher maintains focus and directs student learning, often reflecting back to minilessons pertaining to specific aspects of sharing.
Student role: Students listen to writing and offer feedback in a three point discussion— for example, positive comments, corrective criticism, questions for student author.

Three Essentials for Writing Instruction...at any age

- Time
- Ownership
- Response

Mary Ellen Giacobbe

Writing Craft

- Introductions: How writers start
- Description: How writers choose and use words to enhance meaning
- Organization: How writers make decisions about genre, formats, and sequence
- Focus: How writers keep readers with them
- Conclusions: How writers bring closure to their writing

Past Experience

- Reflect and talk to someone near you about your childhood writing experiences:
 - K-3
 - 4-8
 - 9-12
- Were you taught how to be a writer?

Introductions: How writers start

- **Describe setting:**
 - Just before dusk in the late afternoon of June 16, 1832, I found myself walking along the crowded docks of Liverpool, England, following a man by the name of Grummage. *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* by Avi
- **Introduce the main character:**
 - My name is India Opal Buloni, and last summer my daddy, the preacher, sent me to the store for a box of macaroni-and-cheese, some white rice, and two tomatoes and I came back with a dog. *Because of Winn Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo
- **Dialogue:** (Might include exclamation or be related to the action)
 - “Where’s Pa going with that ax?” said Fern to her mother as they were setting the table for breakfast. “Out to the hoghouse,” replied Mrs. Arable. “Some pigs were born last night.” *Charlotte’s Web* by E. B. White
- **Question:**
 - “Guess what, Pete?” my brother, Fudge, said. “I’m getting married tomorrow.” I looked up from my baseball cards. “Isn’t this kind of sudden?” I asked, since Fudge is only five. *Fudge-a-Mania* by Judy Blume
- **Action/event in progress:**
 - Today is my family reunion! I can hardly wait. *When Lightning Comes in a Jar* by Patricia Polacco

More introductions

- **Exaggeration:**

- Everyone has a bad day. For every new inch that you grow, there's a bad day. Two. Three. But not everyone can pull off a series of them. It's a written rule that Jill Hoherz has to have at least seven of them for every centimeter. And if you look up my name in the dictionary, it says, and I quote, "Caution: May be moody from constant bad days." *One Angel's Smiling Eyes* by Jill Hoherz

- **Sound effects** (onomatopoeia, alliteration, repeated word, bold/capitalized text):

- "Cluck, cluck," the thing rumbled in a deep voice. *Summer Reading is Killing Me* by Jon Scieszka

- **Interesting or shocking fact:**

- When Mrs. Frederick C. Little's second son arrived, everybody noticed that he was not much bigger than a mouse. The truth of the matter was, the baby looked very much like a mouse in every way. *Stuart Little* by E. B. White

- **Name the Problem:**

- I watched the sun edge toward the center of the sky above me. I was hurt real bad. *Pink and Say* by Patricia Polacco
- He did not want to be a wringer. *Wringer* by Jerry Spinelli

Sophisticated Introductions:

- **Misleading lead:**
 - It was in the morning when Jonathan first heard the bell. He was standing in the warm, open field feeling hot, dirty, and bored. His father, not far off, limped as he worked along the newly turned rows of corn. *The Fighting Ground* by Avi
- **Begin at the end:**
 - The bear had been their undoing, though at the time they had all laughed. No, Mama had never laughed, but Lyddie and Charles and the babies had laughed until their bellies ached. *Lyddie* by Katherine Patterson
- **Sentence fragments:**
 - The sea, the sea, the sea. It rolled and rolled and called to me. *Come in*, it said, *come in*. And in I went, floating, rolling, splashing, swimming, and the sea called, *Come out, come out*, and further I went but always it swept me back to shore. *The Wanderer The Wanderer* by Sharon Creech
- **Talk directly to the reader to name the conflict:**
 - If you are interested in stories with happy endings, you would be better off reading some other book. In this book, not only is there no happy ending, there is no happy beginning and very few happy things in the middle. *Series of Unfortunate Events: The Bad Beginning* by Lemony Snicket
- **Literary device such as an idiom, metaphor, simile:**
 - They say Maniac Magee was born in a dump. They say his stomach was a cereal box and his heart a sofa spring. *Maniac Magee* by Jerry Spinelli

4th Grade Samples

“California!” I yelled as the taxi pulled into our driveway. My dad and I pulled the suitcases into the trunk. They were as heavy as elephants!

Trips, Trips, and More Trips by Jessica Garber, 4th grade Parkside School, Solon, Ohio: 2005.

“Good morning, Rosa,” said her mother as Rosa walked down the steps to the kitchen.

“Good morning, Ma,” Rosa said quietly.

Rosa was always sad—being poor, friends making fun of her, and fighting with her siblings. With relatives that live far away, she couldn’t even see them. She wished she had something special.

The Teddy Bear by Sari 4th Grade Parkside School, Solon, Ohio: 2005.

I was packing like crazy!

“Mom,” I began to ask my mother. “When are we going to leave?”

“As soon as your father can get himself together,” she answered, loud enough that my dad could hear and move a little faster.

We were going to Splash Lagoon in Pennsylvania for the New Year’s and I was soooo excited!

Splash Lagoon on New Year’s by Dani Apple, 4th grade, Parkside School, Solon, Ohio: 2005.

It was a wonderful day in Flanktor County. The sun was shining, the birds were chirping and this was a day when kids almost enjoyed school. This day was one of a kind, that is, except for Zack. For Zack, it’s always the same—bullies beating him up, taking his lunch and never making any friends.

The Adventures of Zack and His Not-so-normal Friends by Danny Varghai, 4th grade, Parkside School, Solon, Ohio: 2005

Warning: If you are not familiar with the first Lenny the Superdog book, you will not understand this one. If you don't have the time, here's the scoop...

by Dani, 4th grade, Parkside School, Solon, Ohio: 2005

“He’s gone forever!” I shouted.

You probably are wondering who and why. I’ll start from the beginning.

It was November 1, 1943. I was walking down 53rd Street, feeling the early autumn breeze in my hair. My three pennies were clinking around inside my pocket. My pennies were not copper though, they were tin. This is because it was in the middle of WWII. The soldiers needed the copper, such as my father, who loved the country so much, he was willing to go to war for it. He said it was his duty. When we heard this, my mother, my sister Anabell, my brother, Jon, and I all cried for the next three days.

Where is Daddy? by Allie 4th grade, Parkside School, Solon, Ohio: 2005

It was hot and swampy. Every thing was wet from the rain that just poured in. Everywhere you looked—green: green plants, green bugs, green everything. There was a lot of brown too. Brown trees and brown animals. I could not stand it. I wanted to see a color other than green or brown. Still, nothing could compare to how totally awesome the jungle of Africa was.

Plip. Plip. I heard as my muddy boots hit the ground. To my left, there were animals so cool, I could have stood there forever and looked at them and to my right was a lake with a waterfall so high, the top of it was a blur. Plip. Plip.

by Zack 4th grade, Parkside School, Solon, Ohio: 2005

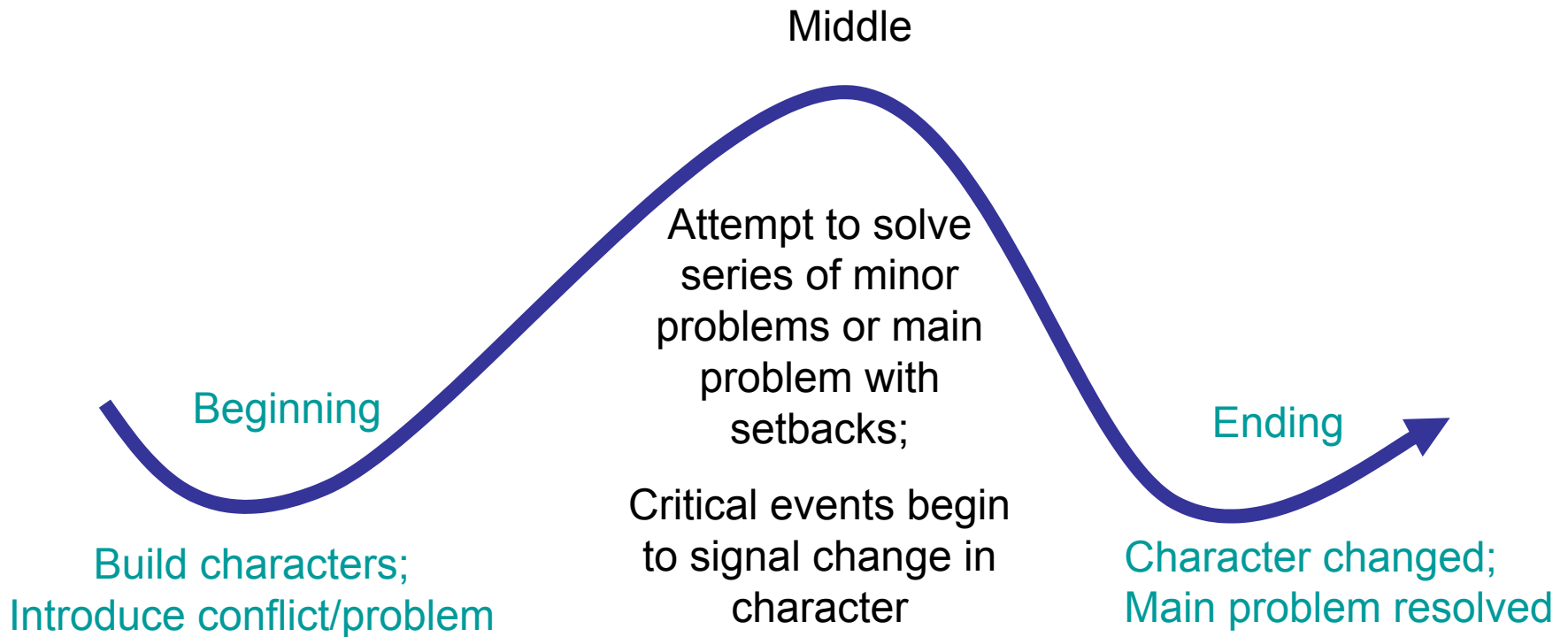
Description: How writers choose and use words to enhance meaning

- Adjectives cannot carry the piece
 - Vivid verbs
 - Use of opposites
 - Repetition
 - Power of three
 - Alliteration
 - Simile and metaphor

“Oh, right!” said Hermione, and she whipped out her wand, waved it, muttered something, and sent a jet of the same bluebell flames she had used on Snape at the plant. In a matter of seconds, the two boys felt it loosening its grip as it cringed away from the light and warmth. Wriggling and flailing, it unraveled itself from their bodies, and they were able to pull free.

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone by J. K. Rowling, p. 278

Organization: How writers make decisions about genre, formats, and sequence



Lost and Found Plot

- Object:
 - Character has something loved or needed
 - Character loses it
 - Looks for it (three or more setbacks)
 - Finds it with some positive emotion attached
- Quest for Knowledge
 - Character gets initial clue that knowledge is needed with a motivation (need) to search
 - Investigates and searches with setbacks—some information helpful and some not as helpful
 - Resolution comes with final important clues or in adding up all clues
 - Knowledge is “found” and character is satisfied

Crime and Punishment Plot

- Introduce a crime—crime is committed
- Two plot directions:
 - A. You know who did it so the story is really about the chase (with setbacks)
 - B. You don't know who did it, so the story is really about figuring out who did it (with setbacks)
 - Conclusion: Culprit is caught or revealed
 - Punishment: Sense of morality/fairness offers closure: Is a lesson learned?

Relationships

Forming:

- Two or more characters are introduced as strangers to one another
- Meet and encounter situations and begin to learn more about one another
- Usually several encounters that often involve misinterpretations or false impressions
- Conflict arises that brings characters to new understanding of one another
- New relationship is formed with emotion involved

Mending:

- Two or more characters are introduced who are already within some relationship (love, friendship, family)
- Stress caused by conflict—opposing character traits arise and jeopardize or temporarily end the relationship
- Time and/or other experiences cause a change in one or more to realize the loss
- Action to resolve, forgive, or re-establish relationship is taken (perhaps with a setback)
- Characters forgive and mend the broken relationship, making a stronger bond than before

Ending

- Two or more characters are introduced who are already within some relationship (love, friendship, family)
- Stress caused by conflict—opposing character traits arise and jeopardize or temporarily end the relationship
- Attempts to resolve conflicts are made and are successful
- Repeated pattern—conflict, hurt feelings, resolution
- Over time, one or more characters tire of this pattern of conflict, hurt, resolution and seeks to end the relationship
- Victim character learns to move on, learns about him/herself, and is usually left in a better situation than before

Character vs. Self

- Character has or inherits a problem: personal feelings, physical/emotional challenge, conflict
- Struggles with challenge which reveals possible solutions and/or character traits
- Choices made and actions taken, usually with setbacks
- Resolution: Problem may remain or be solved but either way the character learns about themselves which usually results in change in beliefs/behaviors—
an element of self-reflection

Character vs. Nature

- There is a character in a harmonious/idyllic/normal environment—leads with description of setting/weather
- Some opposing natural force, disaster, or cycle (or a character that represents the “forces of nature”) is presented and disrupts the harmony
- There is an attempt to solve, overcome, or adapt which leads to the character changing (increased strength)
- The main character survives (usually)
- Often leads to new understanding or new respect for nature as well as character growth

Character vs. Character

- Create and introduce characters that have opposing (opposite) character traits, point of view, or interests
- Place them into a problem situation (create tensions)
- Several attempts (with setbacks) to come to agreement
- Resolution to situation
- Conclusion: Characters realize:
 - Differences are good and acceptable OR
 - There are more similarities than differences OR
 - They can compromise (meet in the middle) and both get something of what they wanted

Character vs. Society

- Main character placed in an environment (setting) with societal conflict—war, ecology, persecution, slavery
- Conflict escalates—foreshadowing, mood, weather suggests doom
- Voice of reason prevails—the “right” or “wrong” is revealed to the reader
- The conflict may or may not be resolved for society, but the surrounding characters are usually changed in attitude, realization, or behavior
- Character change may not be as important in main victim character as in other characters
- Reader connects to characters with sympathy or empathy

Conclusions: How writers bring closure to their writing

- **Emotional:**

- **And so, with laughter and love, we lived happily ever after.** *Ella Enchanted* by Gail Carson Levine
- **And by the ever-loving God who sits above, my heart was full of more joy than I had ever felt before. I was unfettered, alive to an earth I hardly knew but was eager to explore. What's more, I knew that feeling to be my newfound soul, a soul that lived in freedom. And my name—I knew with all my heart—was Crispin.** *Crispin: The Cross of Lead* by Avi

- **Make a comparison:**

- **From that day on, Mary Ellen never again complained about her reading. She found it to be every bit as exciting as a wild chase through the Michigan countryside, and as sweet as honey from a bee tree.** *The Bee Tree* by Patricia Polacco

- **Use a universal word:**

- **She also knew that someday they would tell their children about all of us, and of the magic nights when we caught lightning in a jar.** *When Lightning Comes in a Jar* by Patricia Polacco
- **From that time on, I never feared the voice of thunder again.** *Thundercake* by Patricia Polacco
- **At that moment nothing could have made me happier. And that's a fact.** *The Report Card* by Andrew Clements
- **He inhaled. It was the best smell in the world.** *Bacon. Welcome-home bacon.* *Ruby Holler* by Sharon Creech

More Endings:

- **Talk directly to the reader:**
 - When you read this, before you put this book down, say his name out loud and vow to remember him always. *Pink and Say* by Patricia Polacco
- **Quote:**
 - “...And I’ve seen the promised land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to that promised land.” *My Dream of Martin Luther King* by Faith Ringold
- **Ask a question:**
 - What would I find in Bybanks? It would be an opportunity, I told myself. A new life. *Bloomability* by Sharon Creech
- **Circle back to something from earlier in the piece (beginning):**
 - B: When I was little, my uncle Pete had a necktie with a porcupine painted on it.
 - E: Last month, one day before my birthday, I received a gift-wrapped package in the mail. It was a porcupine necktie. *Star Girl* by Jerry Spinelli
- **Fragments:**
 - King of the Keys. Piano Prince. Edward Kennedy Ellington. The Duke. *Duke Ellington* by Andrea Davis Pinkney

More Endings

- **End with a satisfying event:**
 - He closed his eyes and went to sleep like a baby. *The River* by Gary Paulson
 - “That’s a relief,” I said. “Because I’ll always hate you, too.” “Promise?” she asked. “Promise,” I said. “Let’s shake on it.” I put out my hand. She grabbed it. Then we shook. *Fudge-a-Mania* by Judy Blume
- **Satisfying event that leads to other events:**
 - As he peered ahead into the great land that stretched before him, the way seemed long. But the sky was bright, and he somehow felt he was headed in the right direction. *Stuart Little* by E.B. White
 - Then he boiled mud and put it on his cuts and the dog’s head to keep morning flies away and then took the knife and turned to the bear. There was much work to do. *Brian’s Hunt* by Gary Paulson
 - But I was still there, and that very night I began making plans. That night I decided: Someday I would try the one great passage of the sailor’s world. Someday I would try to sail around Cape Horn. *Caught by the Sea* by Gary Paulson
- **Reflection:**
 - The thing is, I don’t have to be a famous doctor or anything fancy like that to be happy. All I have to be is Juice, just Juice. And that’s enough. *Just Juice* by Karen Hesse

Other Endings

- **Circular—send action back to the beginning of a process again:**
- **Surprise ending:**
- **Last step in a process:**
- **Open end or cliff-hanger:**
- **Offer advice:**
- **Summarize:**
- **Invite the reader to learn more or seek references:**

Picture Books & Read Aloud

- Collection of favorites
- Revisited and well-known
- Examine the writing—
 - look at the craft
 - Study the writing with students
 - Type or copy to examine in minilessons

Using Children's Writing

- Always ask for permission
- Sends powerful messages
 - I did that
 - I want that kind of praise too
 - Someone I know was able to do it, so can I
 - We are all authors
- Keep over time to share along with published authors

To revise, think about these questions:

- Am I clear with my message?
- Will a reader get the message I am trying to send?
- Is it interesting writing? Am I descriptive with my language?
- Is my writing presented in some kind of order that the reader can follow?
- How is my word choice?
- Is there something I know from an author that might help me make this writing better?

Response: To promise

- Comment on something that is *promising* about the writing—name what the writer is doing well. (assessment)
- Show the writer something that *promises* to make the writer stronger in the future. (curriculum and instruction)
- Make a *promise*—child promises to try something different next time or to revise and you promise to be looking for this in the future. (follow-up and accountability)

Publishing Reflection

1. Authors learn about writing by writing. What did you learn about *writing* from finishing this piece?
2. Authors learn from other authors. Did any other authors (from books or our class) help your writing?
3. Being an author is an accomplishment—be proud of yourself! What did you do well in your writing?
4. Authors set goals to become better writers. What is one goal that you have for your writing?

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