

thinking ALOUD

Making Sense of Literacy

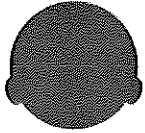
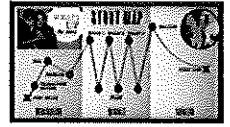


VIDEO SCRIPT

Video: Grunge: The Making of an Adventure

Narrative Story Structure

(story map)



Scene	Full Transcript
1	Narrator: When we last saw our Knowledge Seekers, in <i>Grunge's Big Adventure</i> , Turner had just received promising feedback from his teacher on his first short story. She even suggested getting the work published. Ms. Heeley knows good story structure when she reads it!
2	Natalie: There's the next great author! Turner: Hey! Natalie: I may write a story about you for the school newspaper.
3	Turner: That'd be cool but I'm not great, yet.
4	Natalie: You seemed pretty excited when you texted me.
5	Turner: Oh, yeah. I think I told you I've been sending copies of my story to all kinds of publishers. Can you believe I've already heard back from three of them?
6	Turner: They all liked Grunge and had helpful suggestions, but it wasn't quite the type of story they publish. And this fourth envelope just came in the mail.
7	Natalie: Who's this from? <i>Kid Writer's World!</i> I have a good feeling about his one.
8	Narrator: Hold that Thought! Will Turner's persistence lead to Grunge being published? Has Natalie been inspired to write a tale of her own? Join the Knowledge Seekers as they follow the path to strong story structure in this episode of THINKING ALOUD!
9	Introduction
10	Natalie: Ms. Heeley said that your story structure had improved. What is that?
11	Turner: It is one of the topics that we've been learning about. Once you know the structure of a story, it's easy to write your own. And as an added benefit, knowing story structure also helps you to remember the key points of any story you read.



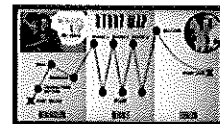
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VIDEO SCRIPT

Video: Grunge: The Making of an Adventure Narrative Story Structure (story map)

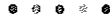


Scene	Full Transcript
12	<p>Voice over Here, let's use this piece of paper to create a story map! First, fold the paper into three equal parts.</p> <p>Turner: There! You've got the basic structure of a story! Each section of the paper represents a part of the story. Every story has a beginning, middle, and an ending!</p>
13	<p>Voice over</p> <p>Natalie: OK?</p>
14	<p>Voice over But there's more. Since we're making a story map, "X" marks the spot where the story begins. We mark another "X" where the story will end. Notice I'm marking my ending "X" higher than my beginning "X" because every reader should gain something from the experience!</p> <p>Turner:</p>
15	<p>Voice over But how do we get from here to there?</p> <p>Natalie:</p>
16	<p>Voice Over That's the creative part!</p> <p>Turner: When I think about starting a story, I need to introduce the reader to the characters. The characters are the people or animals who are in the story. In my story, I decided to have...</p>
17	<p>Voice over</p> <p>Natalie: Grunge!</p>
18	<p>Voice over You're right! I also learned that authors put the characters into a particular time and place, called the setting.</p> <p>Turner:</p>
19	<p>Voice over I remember this! The setting for your story is "One day at the dump."</p> <p>Natalie:</p>



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Scene	Full Transcript
20	<p>Voice Over Turner: Uh-huh! But I also learned that for a story to move forward, the character must have a goal. A goal is something the character wants or works toward. I decided that Grunge wanted to climb Jagged Top Mountain, but he needed a reason.</p> <p>Did you like the soggy travel brochure idea?</p>
21	<p>Voice over Natalie: Clever!</p>
22	<p>Voice Over Turner: So, once you determine a goal for your character, you have to give him a problem. That's when something goes wrong.</p> <p>All stories have to have a problem for the character to solve. Grunge's problem was trying to find a trail to the top of Jagged Top Mountain.</p>
23	<p>Natalie: I can see why he was confused.</p> <p>Turner: I have to think of more than one way for the character to solve his problem.</p> <p>Natalie: So that's the reason for the four trails!</p>
24	<p>Turner: I couldn't have Grunge find the right trail right away. That would have solved the problem too quickly.</p>
25	<p>Natalie: Uh-huh.</p>
26	<p>Turner: Good authors learn the craft of story telling from the traditions of the old storytellers. You know the stories of <i>The Three Bears</i> or <i>The Three Little Pigs</i>?</p>
27	<p>Natalie: Yeah. So what does that have to do with Grunge?</p>
28	<p>Turner: Before there were books with the stories written down, the storyteller needed to be able to remember them.</p> <p>Natalie: (nods)</p> <p>Turner: You know, if you try to remember much more than three things, it's easy to get it mixed up. In a story, the character gets three tries to solve the problem. Of course each one doesn't work.</p>



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29	Turner: Remember the porridge, the chair, and the bed?
30	Natalie: And the straw, sticks, and bricks?
31	Turner: Exactly!
32	Natalie: So this works for short stories. What about novels? Movies? Turner: It gets a little more complicated, but the basic story structure is the framework. A story is a story. Natalie: I had no idea!
33	Voice over Turner: I decided to have Grunge encounter trails with dead ends. To make it more interesting, I thought of...
34	Voice over Natalie: Wait. Don't tell me! There's Walter, Ollie, and Eddie.
35	Voice over Turner: You've got it! Each time Grunge couldn't make it up the mountain, he still has his problem to solve. I indicate each try on the map. Trail A ended at the ski slope. Trail B was wiped out in an avalanche, and Trail C took him to Eddie's bat cave. Because these three events are obstacles to the character achieving the goal, I show him returning to the level of the problem. In each case, Walter, Ollie, and Eddie show Grunge the way back down the mountain.
36	Voice over Turner: So, I label each event. In my Writer's Workshop, we learned the series of these events is called the plot. I also learned that skillful authors save their best idea for last. You see, the author finally writes a solution that does work. The solution is when the problem gets solved.
37	Voice over Turner: It's important that the character meets his goal. The bears come home and Goldilocks runs away.



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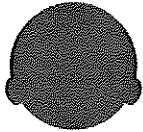
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Scene	Full Transcript
38	<p>Voice over Natalie: Oh! And The wolf comes down the chimney into the pot!</p> <p>I never realized that stories have patterns. So that's why you had Grunge go back up the mountain on Trail D with the herd of mighty mountain goats!</p> <p>Let's see if I've got it. Grunge, your character, lives in a dump, the setting. He wants to get to the top of Jagged Top Mountain, the goal, but he can't find the right trail, the problem. So after three tries, Trail A, B, and C, he joins the mountain goats. He gets to the top of Jagged Top Mountain by way of Trail D, which is the solution!</p> <p>This story structure stuff really works. It did help me remember the parts of your story.</p>
39	<p>Voice over Turner: Hey, pretty good.</p> <p>But I also learned in the writer's workshop that you shouldn't stop writing a story at the point of the solution. The ending is more than "The End." It's the last third of the story. I learned that skillful authors use the ending of the story to wrap it up.</p> <p>I knew I couldn't leave Grunge at the top of the mountain. I decided to have him long for his stinky dump, say good-bye to his new friends, and tell everyone back home about his adventure.</p>
40	<p>Natalie: You know, I'm thinking about the structure of the story I'm going to write about you. It begins with you writing your story. Your goal is to get published, but your problem is finding the right publisher. You've heard back from three different publishers who all said no. And the fourth?</p>
41	<p>Turner: Could be the solution.</p> <p><i>Kid's Writer's World would be pleased to publish Grunge's Big Adventure!</i></p>
42	<p>Natalie: Hey, you did it!</p>
43	<p>Narrator: The Knowledge Seekers have found that there is no mystery in good story structure. You, too, will be well on your way to writing a great masterpiece if you think about the characters, setting, goal, problem, events, and solution. Map your way to great stories, and be sure to watch the next episode of Thinking Aloud!</p>



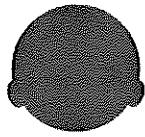
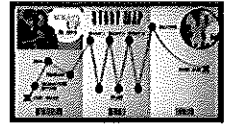
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WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

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Concept of Story

Children who are read to on a regular basis develop a concept of what a story is. Researchers have found that this concept development, or schema, supports children in three important ways. First, children develop a set of expectations about what a story is, the elements (characters, setting, goal, plot, resolution) that belong in a story, and the sequence of these elements. Second, it helps them understand or comprehend the events in the story. Third, it provides a framework to remember the story.

From an early age, children are familiar with the big chunks of a story. Researchers call these the "macrostructures" or "global" elements of story discourse. Every story has three big chunks. The first chunk, also called the beginning, or the *initiating* event, is where some problem or conflict emerges for the character. The middle, or *sequent* events, includes the multiple attempts by the characters to resolve the conflict or solve the problem. The third chunk is the ending, or *final* event, in which the conflict is resolved or the problem is solved. Another element that is often included in stories is the setting, where the author places the character in a particular time or place. The *finale* is an optional element that provides us with the feeling that everything will be all right. It is sort of a restoration or reestablishment of equilibrium. It goes beyond the resolution by adding conventional statements about the main characters – "they lived happily ever after" or "they were friends for the rest of their lives." Since the *finale* hints that the characters are good and well, it often becomes a place for another story to start. A third optional element is the moral of the story. A moral is a message or lesson to be learned from the story. Some examples include: "Better to be safe than sorry," "Don't judge people by the way they look," and "overconfidence in one's abilities may lead to failure or loss."

Learning Story Grammar

Many children learn story grammar (characters, setting, goal, problem, attempts or tries, solution) by listening to stories on a regular basis. Be sure to read to your child often and discuss the story when you do. The following questions may be helpful prompts to start a conversation with him/her:

- Who are the main characters?
- When does the story take place?
- Where does the story take place?
- What do the main characters want to do?
- What happens when the main characters try to do it?
- How does the story end?
- How do the main characters feel?

References:

Pappas, C. C. & Brown, E. (1987). Young children learning story discourse: Three case studies. *The Elementary School Journal*, 87(4), 455-466.

Sadler, B. & Asaro, K. (2007). Increasing story quality through planning and revising: effects on young writers with learning disabilities. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 30(4), 223-234.

Whaley, J. F. (1981). Readers' expectations for story structures. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 17(1), 90-114.