

Realistic Fiction Practice Activities

Realistic Fiction is a style of writing depicting made up stories of what might happen to very real characters, in very real settings, facing very current issues and problems.

Realistic Characters

- Must be credible, even if not real people.
- Language, dress, and mannerisms must fit with today's culture.
- Actions and reactions to situations are consistent with the responses of real people.
- Typically, ordinary people facing challenging problems.

Realistic Settings

- Must be current and vivid.
- Could be actual locations or made up places.
- Every detail of each location must be accurate and believable.

Realistic Plots

- Deal with realistic issues, situations, and problems.
- Range from joyful and fun to challenging and painful sides of life.
- Allow the reader to examine personal emotions, values, and beliefs.
- Allow for awareness, compassion, and sensitivity of others going through the giving situations.
- Serves as a practice for situations the reader may encounter someday.

Ready, Set, Invent!

"I can't believe the Young Inventors' National Competition is tomorrow!" Marina said. "I hope I'm ready."

"Well, you've worked hard, and you have a great invention," her dad said. "I think you're more than ready."

Marina scooped up her invention, the Scoreball, from its stand. She had invented it to solve the problem of keeping score during fast-moving basketball games.

The Scoreball recorded points whenever it dropped through the hoop. It stopped arguments and made playing more fun for Marina and her friends.

Marina had come in first with the Scoreball at other events, but there was a lot more at stake with the national competition. The top prize was a college scholarship.

Marina knew that it would be a battle. Another inventor named Dana Dutcher had won plenty of awards with her own invention. Tomorrow they would meet and compete, face-to-face.

Meanwhile, Dana Dutcher helped tie the shoes of her triplet brothers. Soon, her family would be piling in the van for the long drive to the Young Inventors' National Competition.

She gave each of her little brothers a high five. "I owe you guys," she said. "You gave me the idea for the Zipper-Zapper in the first place."

Last winter, Dana's teacher had told the class to think of a problem and an invention that would solve it. Every morning, Dana had watched her brothers struggling to zip their own coats. Because of them, she designed a magnetic zipper starter that made zipping easier for little hands. The Zipper-Zapper had worked.

It had racked up awards, too, but the national competition was different. The top prize was a college scholarship that Dana didn't just want to win. She needed to win it. Dana had read about the inventor she was up against. Marina Moore and her Scoreball had her worried.

First, please read the story, "Ready, Set, Invent."

Next, answer the following questions:

1. Describe the main character(s) in the story. How realistic are they?
2. Describe the plot of the story. Do you feel this is a realistic plot? Why/why not?
3. This story does not have much of a setting. Work with a family member or friend to describe what the author could do to give this a realistic setting.
4. Explain to a family member or friend why this story is a good example of realistic fiction.

Finally, discuss with a family member or friend who you think won the "Young Inventors' National Competition" Marina Moore or Dana Dutcher? Why do you think this person won?

Megafisherman

Arun San pulled in his father's tattered fishing net. "Every day is the same on the Mekong River," he said. "My nets are empty and my belly is, too."

Laughter and teasing erupted from the crowd on the shore. "This river is full of fish!" a buyer scoffed. "And you could not catch one?"

Arun's face burned. He had borrowed money to buy his boat. If he didn't make the payments, the lender would take his boat away.

"How will I ever provide for my mother?" Arun wondered. He tethered his boat and grabbed his camera, his most prized possession. It had been a gift from his father before he died. "I didn't catch fish today, but at least I caught images," Arun said.

Before dawn, Arun went to a secluded spot and let down his net.

"Maybe I'll have better luck here," he said. While he waited, he snapped photos of the tangerine-colored sunrise and the rolling hills covered in morning mist.

After adjusting his net, his boat gave a hard lurch.

"I've caught something!" Arun exclaimed, pulling up the net. With each tug, the boat rocked and took in water. Sweat poured off Arun's forehead, and his muscles shook.

Then, the tension in the net eased. Gliding to the surface of the river was the most massive stingray Arun had ever seen. Arun drew in a sharp breath, and grabbed his camera with one hand.

As quickly as he could, he snapped photo after photo. Arun had heard of the mega fish in the Mekong River, but no one he knew had ever seen one.

Arun opened the net and set the stingray free. With a few graceful movements, it vanished.

Back on shore, Arun ignored the laughter and pointing fingers of the other fishermen. He ignored the threats of the lender. He ignored the growl of his stomach. On his camera, he had proof that he had just caught and released the largest, heaviest stingray in the world. And with the photos, he now had a way he could provide.

First, please read the story, Megafisherman.

Next, answer the following questions:

1. Describe the main character in the story. How realistic is he?
2. Describe the setting of the story. How realistic is it?
3. Describe the plot of the story. Do you feel this is a realistic plot? Why/why not?
4. Explain to a family member or friend why this story is a good example of realistic fiction.

Finally, discuss with a family member or friend what you think happened during the rest of Arun's life. Explain why you think it turned out this way?