

Adventure... Bound!

Essential Question: How can we help others to pick up a book and why should they?



We have been adventuring. Now we will use our experiences, imagination, and observations to write a book of adventure stories that shares our experiences and also helps spread our love of stories to others in our community.

Adventure... Bound! (suitable for third grade and above).

Artist statement

When I saw the first draft of Ms. Chown's project handout I thought, "I could draw a more exciting picture!" As you can see, I drew a tree, a ladder and a basket. On the tree, I wrote "read" so it looked like it was carved in the tree. I put a ladder so someone could harvest the stories in the tree. When you write a story, you have to make your way up to the final story with a first draft, second draft and editing. This is like climbing a ladder. The tree grows like a story. It goes from a little seed to a whole tree. Just like a story grows from one word or idea.

By Emily Kurth

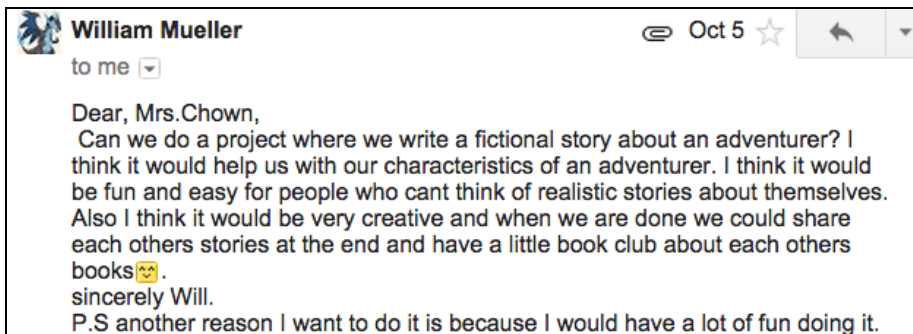
A true (non-fiction) story about a fourth grade class with big¹ ideas.

This is not the project I planned!

The classroom gleamed: every surface was clear and organized, every item had a home, every chair was tucked in. Everything was ready. As she reached out to switch off the lights, Ms. Chown paused for a moment and surveyed the classroom wistfully. It was the day before school started and the classroom would never look like this again.

However, although Ms. Chown sighed, her heart was beating quickly, her eyes shone and a smile played at the corners of her lips. In less than 12 hours, the classroom would be a place of learning: there would be children, there would be passion, there would be scholarship, there would be laughter and singing. Instead of clear surfaces, there would be work that was too big to be filed away and ideas too important to be left unattended inside heads. Most importantly, there would be adventure.

The first project that Room 15 embarked upon was the Adventure, Adventure Arrghh! Project. Students learned about the characteristics of adventurers (and at the same time, the characteristics of learners) by going on adventures both inside the classroom and out. In between reading about Odysseus and Cabrillo, uploading blog posts and planning field trips, Ms. Chown dreamt about the next project that the class would do. What did she want them to learn? Suddenly, Ms. Chown's thoughts were interrupted by an email that flashed up on her computer screen.



Ms. Chown had to admit that this was a persuasive email: it was polite and the idea was supported by clear reasoning. "Hmmm," she thought to herself. "That is not the project I planned..."

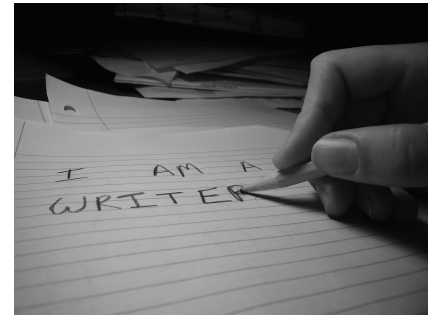
Over the next few weeks, the situation became more serious. Several Room 15ers asked about writing fictional adventure stories and one even shared a google doc with her in which he had written the first few lines of an adventure story. It ended on a cliffhanger. Ms. Chown had to know what happened. There was only one way to find out - Ms. Chown needed to listen to her students, she needed to plan a new project on adventure stories and fast! Ms. Chown beamed. It was time to talk to a rather special independent bookstore: Yellow Book Road.

¹ By big I do, of course, mean: large, sizable, substantial, great, huge, enormous, colossal, massive, mammoth, tremendous, gigantic, giant, monumental, monumental, mighty, lofty etc...

Questions We Will Answer

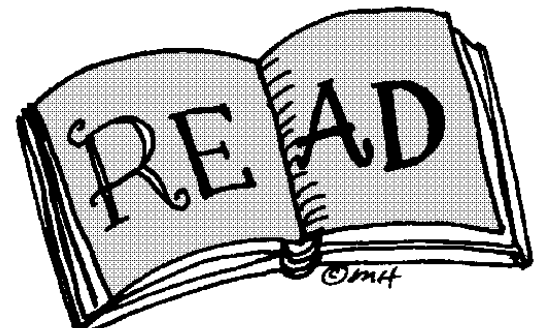
Writing

- How can we plan the best possible adventure stories?
- What can we magpie from poems and stories?
- What should we do when we get stuck with our writing?
- How can we show, not tell?
- What are the ingredients needed in evocative setting descriptions?
- How can we create characters that live in our readers' imaginations?
- How can careful choice of words help us to tell our stories?
- What punctuation will improve the clarity of our writing?



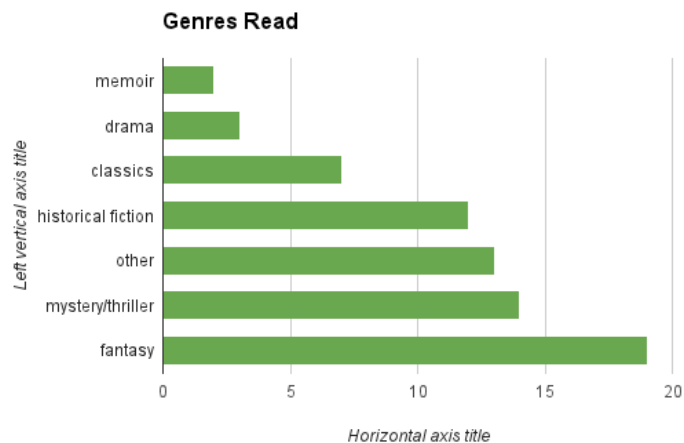
Reading

- What are the features of different genres?
- What are the ingredients of a strong book review?
- Why is reading and hearing stories important?



Math

- How can data collection help us to know more about our class's reading habits?
- How can addition, subtraction, multiplication and division help keep us organized?



Sharing our skills

- How can we support others through peer critique?
- What do local literacy charities do and how can we support them?
- How can we work in groups to organize an exhibition?

Critique

Kind (but honest)

Helpful (so that...)

Specific (be precise)

Hard on the content
Soft on the person

Step up –
step back

Welcome to the *FAQ* section of this project sheet, in which I shall endeavor to answer your wonderings.



What will we do and why?

Through reading, experiences, ideas and imagination, drafts, revision and critique, we will write adventure stories that are unputdownable. At the same time, we will work to help others to love books. Perhaps they will get hooked from reading our words or be inspired after reading our our book reviews (in Yellow Book Road and on Amazon). Or perhaps someone will be inspired to love stories because of the money we raise for a local literacy charity.

What will we learn?

The short answer is that you will improve your reading, writing and math. In reality, it is more complex. If you can tell a good story, you can do anything². We will learn about the power of stories and how reading can change lives. In our own work, our setting descriptions will transport the reader into the world of our adventure, our character descriptions will help our readers to feel like they have just made a close friend - or a terrifying enemy, our plots will contain problems we can resolve.

Who will I work with?

You will be paired with a writing partner who will know your strengths as a writer and what you could improve upon. You will also give and receive critique from others in the class (we are a class that supports each other).

In our last project, you worked in groups to organize a meal for our camping adventure. It was sometimes hard but you did it: the meals were delicious! In this project, you will become even better at working in a group. You will work in fours to plan our entire exhibition.

And Exhibition?

That's up to you!

² Advertisers, CEOs, journalists and politicians all know how to tell stories to help their situation. Stories can make us delighted, passionate, enraged and depressed - these are powerful emotions to have at your fingertips.