



Gold Seal Lesson

Author(s): Jennifer J. Janowiak			Lesson Title: Dear Author			
Grade Span			ICLE Application Model			
K-4	5-8 XX	9-12	A	B XX	C	D

Instructional Focus:

Reading

Students read a variety of grade level materials, applying strategies appropriate to various situations.

Writing

Students write for a variety of purposes and audiences with sophistication and complexity appropriate to the grade level.

Performance Task

Students will analyze a piece of fiction and then put their thoughts into a persuasive letter to the author persuading him/her to keep the story the way it is or to change certain elements and explain why.

1. This lesson works well with literature directly from your literature series or a novel that all students have read. You will want the students to comment on the same piece of writing. At this point, you may want to choose a piece of writing and discuss it with the whole class and have students vote on what story they would like to discuss. Try to find a story that illicit student interest.
2. Once a story is selected, as a class, diagram the elements of the plot. For example find elements of foreshadowing, rising action, climax, conflict, falling action, and resolution. This helps the students see the different elements of the story they will be analyzing and see how each element connects and/or affects another.
3. Once the students have an outline of the story, tell them they will be writing a letter to the author about their thoughts on the effectiveness of the plot. For example, a student may think the foreshadowing and rising action added excitement to the plot, but that the resolution was not what he/she expected. The student may suggest possible changes.
4. Certain students may argue that they like the story just the way it is and would not change anything. If this is the opinion, they need to address in their letter the elements of plot that they liked citing specific references to the text.
5. Each letter must contain an introduction, two body paragraphs in which the students address two issues (one per paragraph) and a conclusion. Students can approach the task in many ways. They can address what they liked in one paragraph and perhaps suggest something they would change in the other. They may want to discuss two elements they would change or two elements they love and would keep. What ever they do, they must provide the answer to "why" and they must make specific references to the text. I suggest each paragraph be five to seven sentences long. The letter must be in correct business letter form and must be edited to be appropriate to send to an author.
6. When the writing is done, encourage students to share with the class. If possible, send some of the letters to the author.

ICLE Essential Skills

Identify, collect and/or select pertinent information while reading (ela 5)

Summarize, synthesize, and organize information while reading (ela 24)

Discriminate important ideas from unimportant ideas while reading (ela 15)

Evaluate the way an author uses language and text characteristics such as plot, setting, theme, character, point of view, genre etc. to evoke a response in a reader (ela 72)

Use ideas from journals, class discussion and literary criticism to write a paper that expresses a personal opinion, sustains a controlling idea, or uses specific evidence from literary text to support an opinion (ela 34)

Define a position on a controversial topic and write a persuasive essay or make an oral presentation likely to persuade a specific audience to change an opinion or take a particular action. (ela 27)

Understand the nature and purpose of and be able to word process a variety of formats including essays, business letters, memos, instructions, policy statements, technical proposals, user manuals, lab reports, etc. (ela 30)

Scoring Guide:

4= The student demonstrates in class discussion and in the letter a complete understanding of the elements of plot and can articulate the ways the elements connect and/or affect each other. The letter is word processed in appropriate business letter format. The letter contains the prescribed number of paragraphs and contains an introduction, a two-paragraph body, and a conclusion. The student explains his/her likes and dislikes about the plot and is able to explain why he/she holds the opinion he/she does. The letter is appropriately persuasive and could easily be sent to an author as written.

3 = The student demonstrates in class discussion and in the letter a satisfactory understanding of the elements of plot and can diagram them. The letter is neatly written in appropriate business letter format. The letter contains the prescribed number of paragraphs. The students explains his/her likes and dislikes and is able to explain his/her opinion but the arguments are not as logical or convincing as the “4” arguments. The letter is somewhat persuasive and could be sent to an author after minor revisions are made.

2 = The student may understand the interconnected ness of the elements of plot, but the evidence is not conclusive. The letter is neatly written in appropriate format and contains the prescribed number of paragraphs. The student identifies likes and dislikes in the plot but does not offer realistic reasons or justifications for his/her opinion. The letter is not persuasive and could not be sent to an author without major revision.

1 = The student does not seem to understand the elements of plot. The letter is hand written and is not complete. The student is unable to identify personal likes and dislikes nor support any attempts to identify them. The letter is not persuasive and could not be sent to an author.

0 = The task is not attempted.

Keywords

English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science
Reading Authors Comprehension	Algebra	Earth Science
Writing Persuasion	Geometry	Life Science
Communications	Statistics	Chemistry
Literature Fiction Plot	Calculus	Physics
Other Business letter	Trigonometry	Other
	Other	