

Aboriginal Education Day Junior Lesson Plan



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**EDUCATION DAY
CANADIAN ABORIGINAL FESTIVAL
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2009 – COPPS COLISEUM**

Junior Curriculum Connections

The Great Birch Tree

Adapted and modified from The Great Kapok Tree Readers' Theatre

by Lynne Cherry

Overall Expectations

Language

Oral Communication

- Use speaking skills and strategies appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

Reading

- Read and demonstrate an understanding of a variety of literary, graphic, and informational texts, using a range of strategies to construct meaning.
- Use knowledge of words and cuing systems to read fluently.

Writing

- Generate, gather, and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience.
- Draft and revise their writing, using a variety of informational, literary, and graphic forms and stylistic elements appropriate for the purpose and audience.

Media Literacy

- Create a variety of media works for different purposes and audiences, using appropriate forms, conventions, and techniques.

Social Studies

Grade 4

- Identify Canada's provinces and territories and its main physical regions, (e.g., Canadian Shield, Appalachians, Hudson Bay lowlands, Arctic lowlands, etc.).
- Describe and compare the environments of the physical regions of Canada, (e.g., with respect to landforms and waterways).

Grade 5

- Use a variety of resources and tools to investigate characteristics of a number of early civilizations, including how they interacted with and used the natural environment.
- Identify and compare the ways in which people in various early civilizations met their physical and social needs, including how they interacted with and used the natural environment.

Grade 6

- Describe characteristics of pre-contact First Nations cultures across Canada.

Science

Grade 4

- Analyse the effects of human activities on Habitats and Communities.
- Investigate the interdependence of plants and animals within specific habitats and communities.
- Demonstrate an understanding of Habitats and Communities and the relationships among the plants and animals that live in them.

Grade 5

- Analyse the immediate and long-term effects of energy and resource use on society and the environment and evaluate options for conserving energy and resources.

Grade 6

- Assess human impacts on biodiversity and identify ways of preserving biodiversity.

Drama

Grade 4 & 5

- Interpret and communicate the meaning of stories, films, plays, songs, and other material drawn from a range of different sources and cultures.

Visual Arts

Grade 6

- Describe their interpretation of a variety of art works, basing their interpretation on evidence from the works. Produce two and three-dimensional works of art that communicate a range of ideas for a specific purpose and audience.

Integrated Lesson Plan

There are two units. Both units use the gradual release of responsibility model to support students in acquiring the skills and knowledge needed to complete the culminating tasks independently and display their acquired knowledge. The first unit focuses on identifying the story structure in two different texts, The Great Birch Tree Readers' Theatre and The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry. The students are then given the opportunity to write their own stories using a similar story structure. This lesson is easily integrated with the Social Studies and Science curriculum.

Unit 1

Students will be building on skills that will include presentations of information, to writing from an Aboriginal perspective.

Length of Time: ten days

Day One

- Accessing prior knowledge, either independently or as a group completes the “what you know, what you want to know, and what you learned” **KWL** reproducible – Appendix 1, to demonstrate prior knowledge/experiences regarding First Nations people and their use of birch trees, birch bark, and other plants and trees in the natural environment.
- Teacher introduces Readers' Theatre as a scripted form of storytelling and explains the significance of oral storytelling to transmit knowledge and culture in First Nations communities.
- Teacher distributes the Readers' Theatre script and reads it over with students to familiarize them with the vocabulary, script format, and to review appropriate ways to present information - communicating clearly, using tone, pitch, and volume. Use rubric for **Readers' Theatre Presentation Rubric** – Appendix 2.

Day Two and Day Three

- Teacher places students in groups and provides time for students to practice the script while s/he circulates to assist any students requiring support with focus, group dynamics, reading strategies. (See Modifications and Accommodations section for ways to support students).

Day Four

- Students present to the class or another group. Student/peer or teacher assessment could be done using the following reproducible: **Self/Peer Assessment in Drama Groups – Readers’ Theatre Presentation Rubric** – Appendix 3.

Day Five

- Refer to the teacher background for information on Native teachings.
- Using The Great Birch Tree Readers’ Theatre the teacher models the use of the reproducible **Characteristics of Fiction** – Appendix 5 (conflict/character/solution/main idea). Each student then completes their own individual graphic organizer using the whole group generated graphic organizer as a model.

Day Six

- Read The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry. Develop a list of key vocabulary words as a group for students to reference as they independently complete the graphic organizer **Characteristics of Fiction** – Appendix 5, identifying the conflict/character/solution/main idea to show their level of understanding and personal response. For students who require additional modelling the teacher works with them as a small group.

Day Seven, Eight, and Nine

- Culminating task. Students are given the opportunity to write their own Readers’ Theatre script. Using the graphic organizer **Characteristics of Fiction** – Appendix 5, students develop a framework for their Readers’ Theatre. Provide an opportunity to peer conference to clarify ideas and to orally share their outline.
- Students then write their story using the details from their graphic organizer.
- Student self and peer edit their writing for grade level conventions appropriate for their grade use **Writing Assessment - Readers’ Theatre** – Appendix 15.

Day Ten

- Journal Reflection. Students respond in their journal.

Topics suggestions:

- Describe some of the environmental issues or concerns that you learned about from class discussions about The Great Birch Tree, and The Great Kapok Tree.
- Where do you see the environment in 20 years?
- What can you do to look after Mother Earth?

Note: The Readers' Theatre writing activity can be linked to grade specific expectations for both Science and Social Studies. (e.g., Grade 4 Science link to habitat and Grade 5 Social Studies link to Ancient Civilizations, etc.)

Unit 2

Text Form Comparison

Length of time: two days

- Both the Readers' Theatre format of The Great Birch Tree and the picture book format of The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry are forms of narrative writing. To assist students in identifying the various features of the two formats set up a place mat activity. See reproducible **Place Mat Instructions** – Appendix 6 if unfamiliar with this activity.
- Divide the class into groups of four. Assign half the groups to identify the features of a Readers' Theatre format and half the groups to identify the features of the picture book format.
- Have one person from the group present the findings.

Day Two

- Post the place mats around the room.
- Classroom “walk about” so that each student has the opportunity to read the information about the various features of the writing formats.
- Culminating task. Students use the reproducible **Comparing Narrative Forms Venn Diagram** – Appendix 7 to individually record the differences and similarities between the two narrative formats; the Readers' Theatre and the picture book format.

Modifications and Accommodations

- Teacher circulates to assist struggling readers with difficult vocabulary or buddies them up with a peer.
- Teacher gives extra practice for students who need it, or reduces the amount they need to read or present. They could also be invited to share the part with a partner and read it together.
- Teacher helps students with their oral communication and presentation skills.
- Struggling writers can write less and create a shorter play or narrative or make a story board of illustrations/photographs.
- Non-writers can have the teacher or a peer scribe their play or narrative story. They could also make an audio recording or video recording of their story.

- Struggling writers can have the teacher edit their narrative, Readers' Theater or story board.

Recommended Extensions

- Persuasive writing. Locate newspaper articles relating to current environmental issues. Write a letter to the Minister of Natural Resources or to the Editor to suggest ways to work towards solutions for environmental issues.
- Students are invited to respond to how they felt with either The Great Birch Tree Readers' Theatre or The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry. Reproducible: ***My Feelings about a Particular Story*** – Appendix 8.
- Read both The Great Birch Tree Readers' Theatre and The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry to the class. Complete a Venn diagram comparing the two stories. Reproducible: ***Story Comparison*** – Appendix 9.
- Students create a mask to represent a character from the Readers' Theatre, The Great Birch Tree or from the Readers' Theatre they have written. Use paper plates, paper bags, and found materials.
- Create a diorama to represent the setting of the story that they have written.

Recommended Extensions

- As a class identify the animals and the other life in the story that would be affected by the birch tree being cut down.
- Discuss how natural resources have been mismanaged, what living things are vulnerable in this process, the long-term effects, and how sustainability of resources is important for the future.
- Students are given the opportunity to express their opinion on issues explored during classroom discussion about the Readers' Theatre The Great Birch Tree or The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry. Reproducible: ***My Opinion Counts*** – Appendix 10.

Evaluation

Oral presentation can be assessed for presentation skills (oral, visual communication). Using the following assessment reproducible:

- **Readers' Theatre Presentation Rubric** – Appendix 2;
- **Group Participation: Self Evaluation** – Appendix 4
- **Oral Communication Listener's Reflection Sheet** – Appendix 11;
- **Oral Communication Teacher Evaluation For Readers' Theatre** – Appendix 12; and
- **Oral Communication Self-Evaluation Sheet** – Appendix 13.

Written narrative can be assessed using the proper form and including the necessary components (characters, setting, events leading up to the problem, problem, and solution writing) Assessing Writing-Readers' Theatre Characteristics of Fiction, Story Comparisons.

Dramatic presentation can be assessed (drama), using **Readers' Theatre Presentation Rubric** – Appendix 2.

Art piece can be assessed (art).

Overall Learning Skills Reproducible: **Learning Skills General Rubric** – Appendix 14.

Resources

- Readers' Theatre Script: The Great Birch Tree by Lynne Cherry – Appendix 16
- Four Directions: www.teachings.com.
- The Great Kapok Tree Picture Book – ISBN 0-688-06364-0.

KWL

Appendix 1

| What I Know | What I Want to Know | What I Learned |
|--------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | |

Readers' Theatre Presentation Rubric

Appendix 2

Name: _____

Date: _____

| | LEVEL 4 | LEVEL 3 | LEVEL 2 | LEVEL 1 |
|------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| Oral Delivery Volume | Consistently speaks loudly enough for audience to hear. | Usually speaks loudly enough for audience to hear. | Sometimes speaks loudly enough for audience to hear. | Speaks too soft or loud to hear. |
| Oral Delivery Clarity | Words are pronounced correctly and easily understood. | Most words are pronounced correctly and easily understood. | Some words are pronounced correctly and easily understood. | A few words are pronounced correctly and easily understood. |
| Reads with Expression | Consistently reads with appropriate expression with a high degree of effectiveness. | Usually reads with appropriate expression. | Sometimes reads with appropriate expression. | Reads with little or no expression. |
| Oral Delivery Reads in Turn | Always takes turns accurately. | Generally takes turns accurately. | Sometimes takes turns accurately. | Requires cueing to take turns accurately. |
| Co-operation with Group | Consistently works well with others. | Usually works well with others. | Sometimes works well with others. | Experience difficulty working with others. |

Self/Peer Assessment, Drama Groups

Upon completion of your drama activity, reflect on your group skills, and contributions.

Complete the inventory below and ask one peer from your group to provide feedback.

Use the following four-point scale to indicate your evaluation:

- 4 - Always**
- 3 - Usually**
- 2 - Sometimes**
- 1 - Rarely**

| Learning Skill | Self-assessment (1, 2, 3, 4) | Peer-assessment (1, 2, 3, 4) | Peer comments |
|---|---|---|----------------------|
| Comes to class on time and prepared. | | | |
| Uses class time effectively to work on project. | | | |
| Co-operates with group members. | | | |
| Listens to and respects the ideas of others. | | | |
| Follows instruction. | | | |
| Meets deadlines in completing individual contribution to the anthology. | | | |

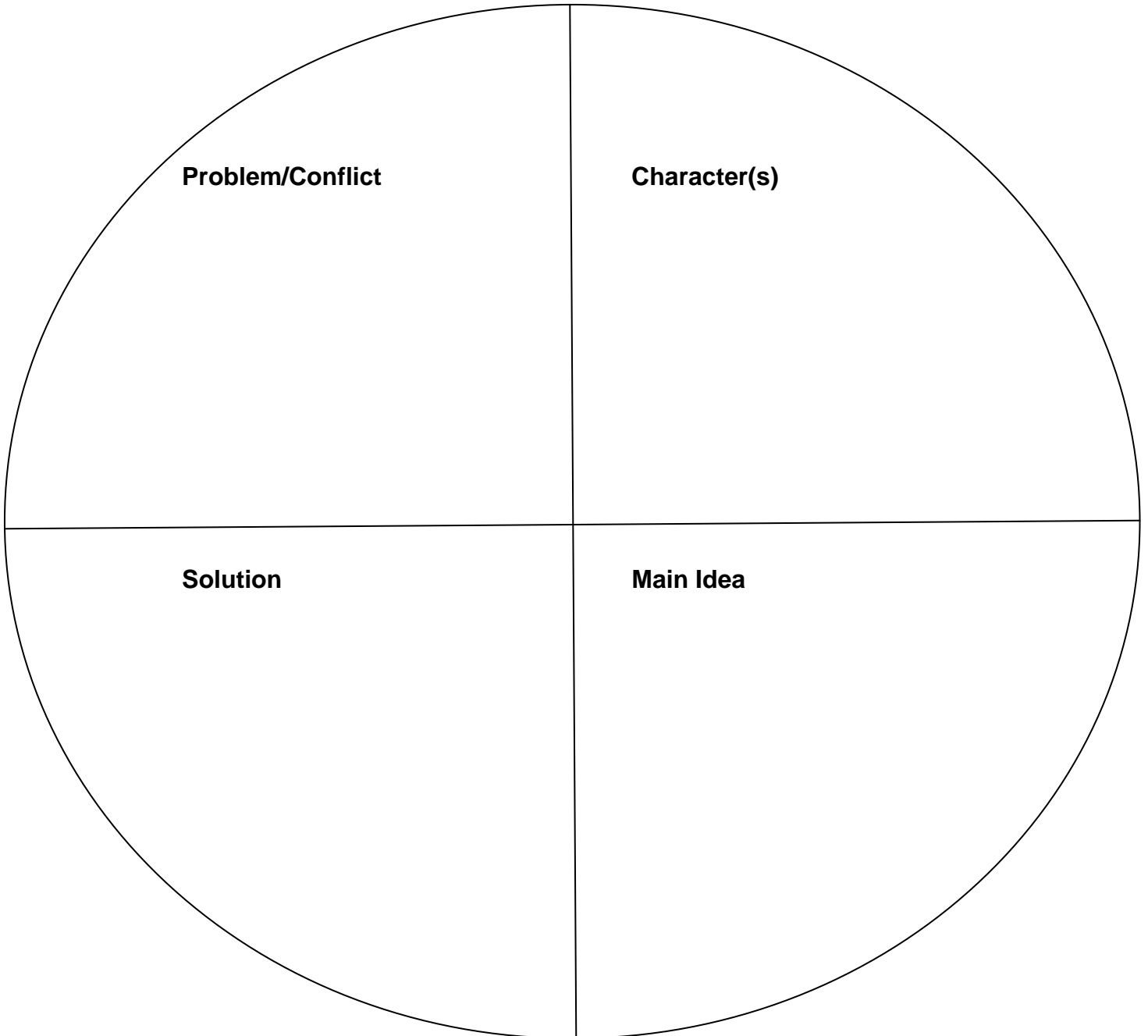
Group Participation: Self-Evaluation

A large circle is divided into four equal quadrants by a vertical line and a horizontal line. Each quadrant contains a prompt for self-evaluation:

- Top-left quadrant: **I LISTENED** to others by
- Top-right quadrant: **I TOOK TURNS** by
- Bottom-left quadrant: **I WAS GOOD** at
- Bottom-right quadrant: **I VALUED** the suggestions of others

Characteristics of Fiction

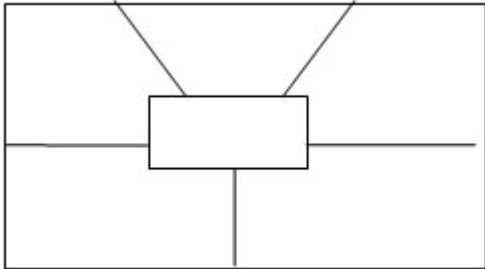
Describe the following...



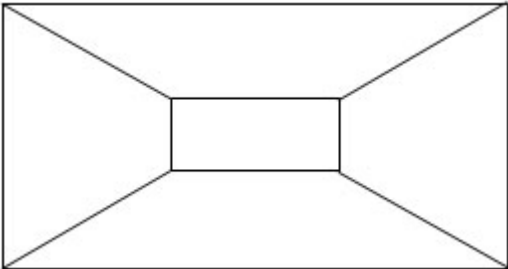
Place Mat Activity

The place mat activity involves groups of students working in groups of four or five around a single piece of paper at the same time. This allows the students to record individual responses and ideas. There is built in accountability for all students. Students may respond in pictures or words. All members of the group are involved. Provide time for the group to share their responses within the group and also have the group choose a speaker to represent their ideas to the class.

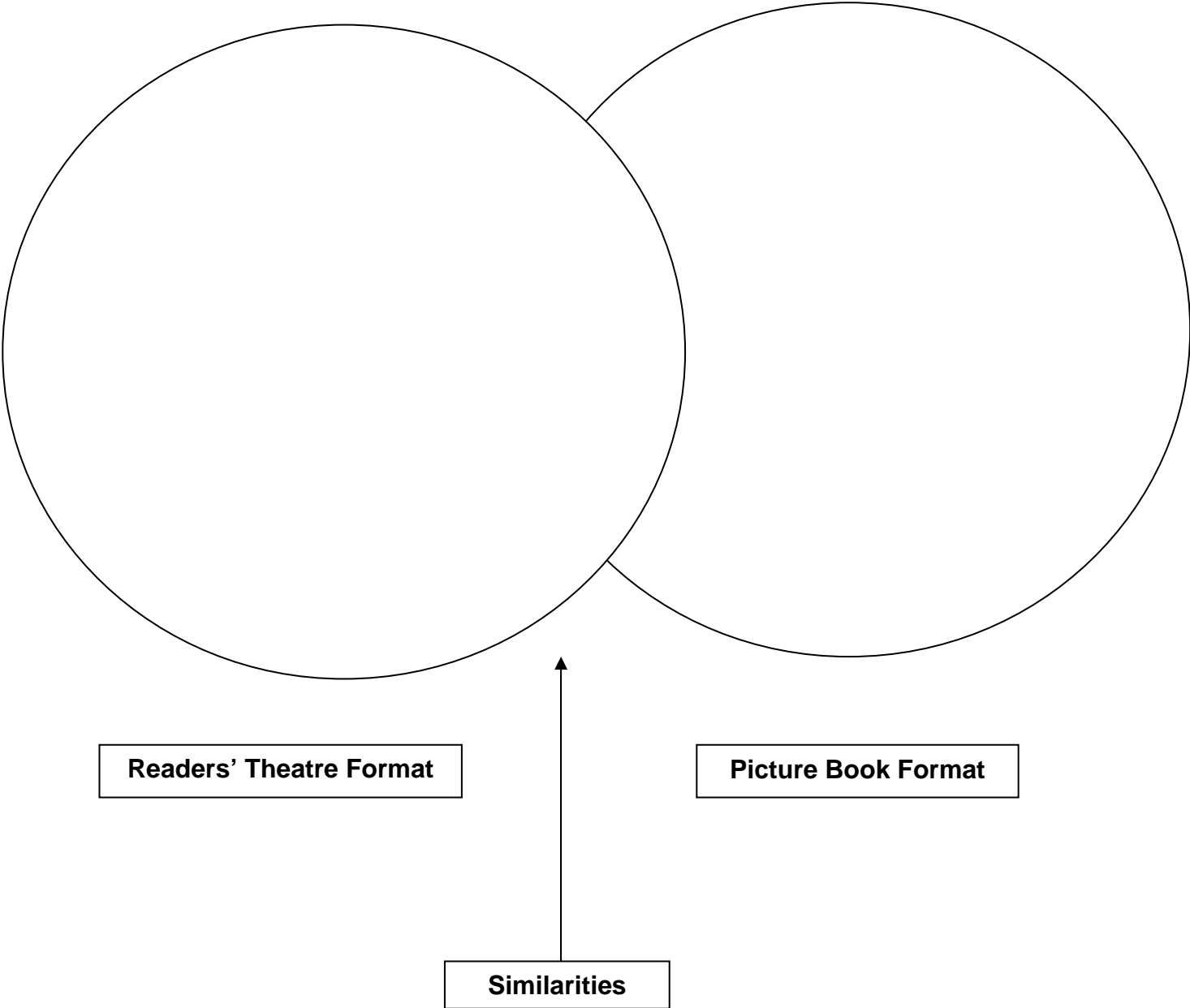
Place mat for a five-member group



Place mat for a four-member group



Comparing Narrative Forms Venn Diagram

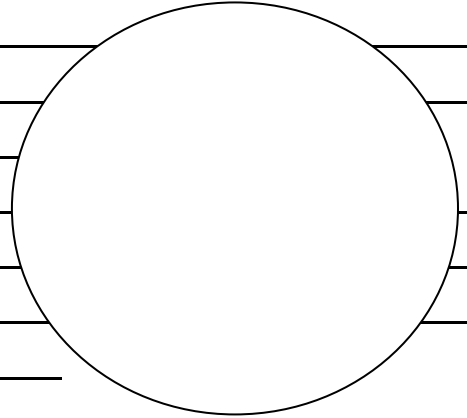


My Feelings about a Particular Story

Record how you felt about the story. Beside each reason, draw a picture of your face representing how you felt about it.

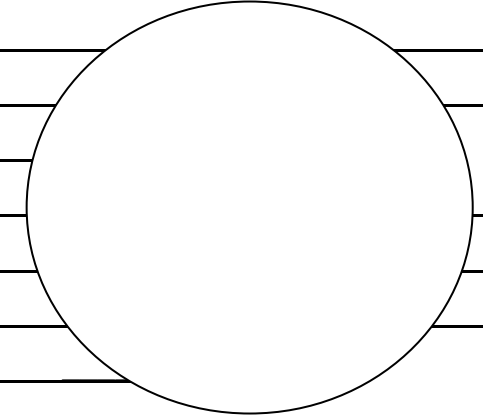
At the beginning of the story I felt _____

Because _____



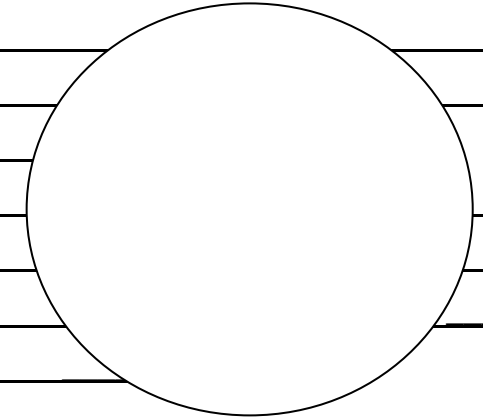
In the middle of the story I felt _____

Because _____

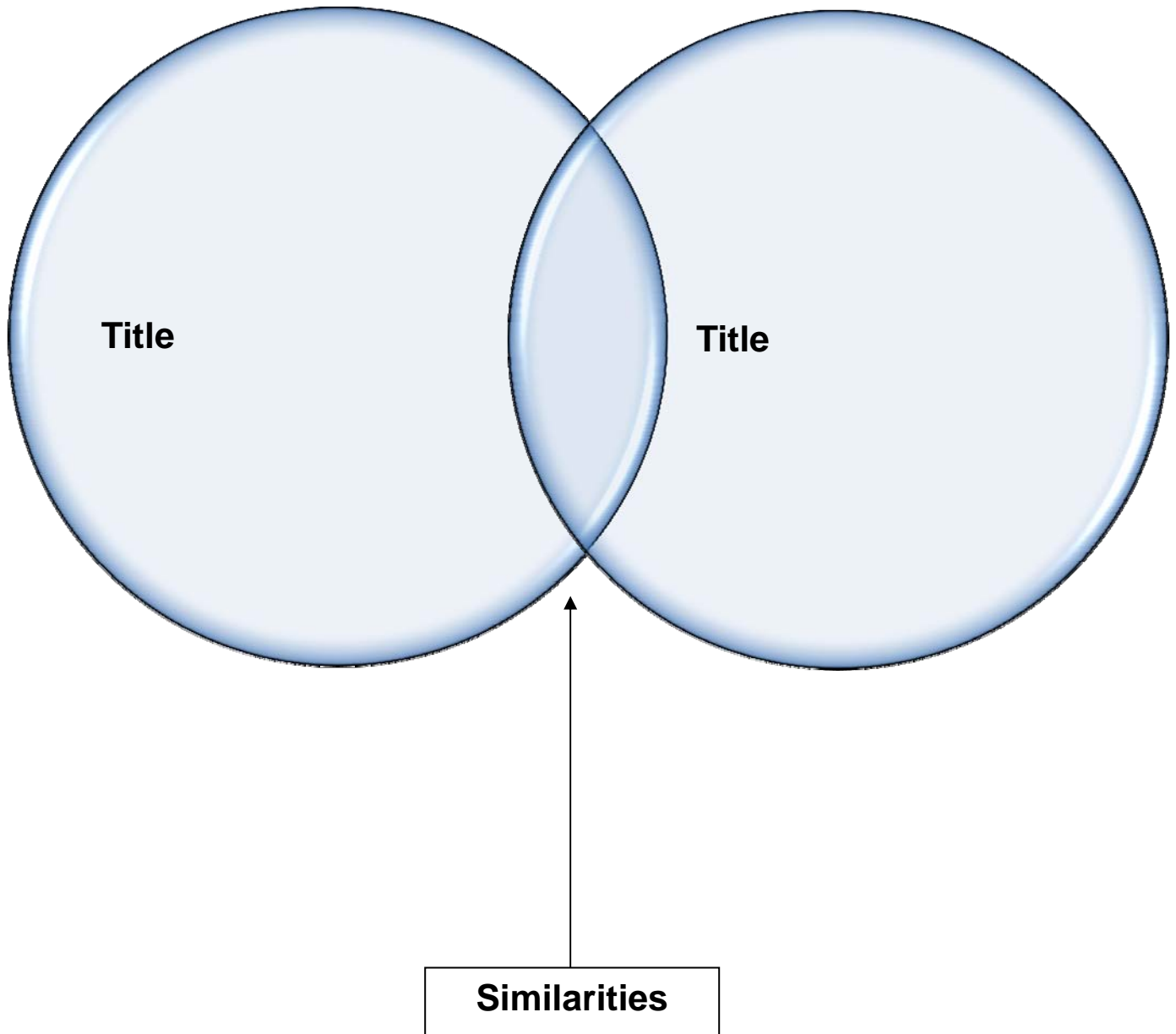


At the end of the story I felt _____

Because _____



Story Comparison



My Opinion Counts

Choose one of the topics introduced through the story. Record your thoughts. Draw a picture of your ideas on the reverse side of this paper.

Topic: _____

My thoughts on the topic:

Why do I think this way?

Oral Communication Listener's Reflection Sheet

Student Name: _____

Oral communication is when people are involved in a conversation, or they are presenting information to others. It is a skill to listen well to others and be a good audience member.

A good **listener** or audience member does the following:

- Listens attentively to the speaker (eye contact) and does not interrupt;
- Nods the head and leans forward towards the speaker to show they are listening;
- Doesn't criticize the speaker;
- Silently raises hand to ask a question or contribute an idea;
- Links their responses to the topic being presented;
- Gives positive feedback to the speaker about what they did well;
- Patiently waits for a turn;
- Acknowledges the opinions of others without criticism; and
- Doesn't distract the speaker (no fidgeting or making sounds).

What are three strengths you have as a listener?

As a listener, what are two things you could improve?

What are your strategies to improve in these two areas?

Oral Communication Teacher Evaluation for Readers' Theatre

Appendix 12

Student Name: _____

Group Work Checklist:

When the student practiced/presented the Readers' Theatre did they contribute meaningfully and work constructively in their group by:

| | Yes | No | Sometimes |
|----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----------|
| Offering praise | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| Giving feedback | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| Using problem-solving strategies | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| Brainstorming relevant ideas | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| Staying on task | ___ | ___ | ___ |

Independent Presentation Checklist:

When the student practiced/presented the Readers' Theatre, did they demonstrate an understanding of appropriate speaking behaviour by:

| | Yes | No |
|---|-----|-----|
| Speaking clearly, at a good pace and volume level | ___ | ___ |
| Showing they know the topic well and can speak about it | ___ | ___ |
| Keeping eye contact with their audience | ___ | ___ |
| Answering questions about the topic | ___ | ___ |
| Showing confidence as a speaker | ___ | ___ |
| Seeming to enjoy speaking about the topic, with expression | ___ | ___ |
| Listening attentively to audience questions/comments | ___ | ___ |
| Catching the interest of the audience, making the topic interesting | ___ | ___ |

Oral Communication Self-Evaluation Sheet

Student name: _____

Oral communication is when people are involved in a conversation, or they are presenting information to others. It is a skill to speak well and clearly.

A good **oral speaker** does the following:

- Speaks clearly, at a good pace and volume level;
- Knows the topic well and can speak about it;
- Keeps eye contact with their audience;
- Answers questions about the topic;
- Shows confidence as a speaker;
- Seems to enjoy speaking about the topic and speaks with expression;
- Listens attentively to the audience when they have a question or comment to make; and
- Catches the interest of the audience and makes the topic seem interesting.

What are three strengths you have as a speaker?

As a speaker, what are two things you could improve?

What are your strategies to improve in these two areas?

Learning Skills General Rubric

Appendix 14

| Skill | Needs Improvement | Satisfactory | Good | Excellent |
|--------------------------|--|---|--|---|
| Co-operation with others | Rarely listens to, acknowledges and considers differing opinions. | Sometimes listens to, acknowledges, and considers differing opinions. | Usually listens to, acknowledges, and considers differing opinions. | Always listens to, acknowledges, and considers differing opinions. |
| Respect for others | Shows limited respect for class/group members. | Sometimes shows respect for all members of the class/group. | Usually shows respect for all class/group members. | Consistently demonstrates respect for all class/group members. |
| Teamwork | With a partner or in a group, has difficulty demonstrating respect, co-operation, and participation. | With a partner or in a group, demonstrates some respect, co-operation, and participation. | With a partner or in a group demonstrates respect, co-operation, some leadership, and participation. | With a partner or in a group, demonstrates respect, co-operation, leadership, and frequent participation. |
| Class Participation | Rarely contributes information and ideas to the class/group. | Sometimes contributes information and ideas to the class/group. | Usually contributes information and ideas to the class/group. | Consistently contributes information and ideas to the class/group. |
| Conflict Resolution | Uses a very limited variety of strategies to resolve conflicts often ineffectively. | Uses limited variety of strategies to resolve conflicts appropriately. | Uses a variety of strategies to resolve conflicts appropriately. | Uses a wide variety of strategies to resolve conflicts appropriately. |

Writing Assessment – Readers’ Theatre

Student Name: _____

Use this evaluation sheet to evaluate the Readers’ Theatre writing task. Circle the number that best represents the student’s work in that area.

| | very little evidence of this was included | some evidence of this was included | an adequate level of this was included. | this was thoroughly and consistently included. |
|---|---|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Brainstorming | | | | |
| Have they generated an adequate quantity/quality of ideas regarding what the Readers’ Theatre could be about and who could be involved? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Have they looked through their idea list to determine whether the ideas they have gathered are relevant and adequate for the purpose of the Readers’ Theatre? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Have they shared their ideas with their peers/teacher for feedback on strengths and areas of need? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Writing Form | | | | |
| Have they included an appropriate title for the Readers’ Theatre? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Have they correctly and consistently included proper Readers’ Theatre form? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Have they included the speaker’s name and the spoken lines/narrative for that character every time? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Writing Process | | | | |
| Have they used words or phrases that help to convey their meaning, plot action, and develop the character profile? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Have they established a personal voice for each character in the play, showing each character’s unique perspective? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Does the Readers’ Theatre make sense/unfold in a logical and organized way? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Editing Process | | | | |
| Have they self/peer-edited the rough copy to find errors in convention, spelling, reasoning, organization, word choice, and fluency? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Did they show evidence of the editing process, (e.g., re-ordering sentences, removing and adding words, including more descriptive words, consistent tense, and spelling correction?) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

The Great Birch Tree

Appendix 16

Adapted and modified from The Great Kapok Tree Readers' Theater
by Lynne Cherry

Narrator: One woman was walking into the forest. Moments before, the forest had been alive with the sounds of squawking birds and howling wolves. Now all was quiet as the forest animals watched the woman and wondered why she had come. The woman stopped and struck the trunk of the tree with her ax.

The Woman: Whack! Whack! Whack!

Narrator: The sounds of the blows rang through the forest. The wood of the tree was very hard. The white papery bark peeled back from the trunk.

Woman: Chop! Chop! Chop!

Narrator: The woman wiped off the sweat that ran down her face and neck.

The Woman: Whack! Chop! Whack! Chop!

Narrator: Soon the woman grew tired. She sat down to rest at the foot of the great birch tree. Before she knew it, the heat and hum of the forest had lulled her to sleep. A squirrel lived in the great birch tree. She scampered down its trunk to where the woman was sleeping. The squirrel looked at the gash the ax had made in the great birch tree. Then the squirrel climbed onto her shoulder and softly chatted in her ear.

Squirrel: Ikwe (woman) this tree is a tree of miracles. It is my home, where generations of my ancestors have lived. Do not chop it down.

Narrator: A butterfly flew near the sleeping woman's ear.

Butterfly: Ikwe (woman) our home is in this great birch tree and I fly from tree to tree and flower to flower collecting pollen. In this way I pollinate the trees and flowers throughout the forest. You see, all living things depend on one another.

Narrator: A wolf appeared from behind the great birch tree. He growled to the sleeping woman.

Wolf: Ikwe (woman) I have seen the ways of man. You chop down one tree, and then come back for another and another. The roots of these great trees will wither and die, and there will be nothing left to hold the earth in place. In the spring when the rains come, the soil will be washed away and there will be no place for new trees or plants to grow.

Narrator: An eagle flew down from the tree tops.

Eagle: Ikwe (woman) you must not cut down this tree. I have flown over the forest and have seen what happens once you begin to chop down the trees. Many people settle on the land. They bring

bulldozers and big machines to clear the land and soon the forest disappears. Where once there was life and beauty now are houses, roads, and concrete.

Narrator: A bright and small tree frog crawled along the edge of a leaf. In a squeaky voice he piped in the woman's ear.

Frog: Ikwe (woman) a ruined forest means ruined lives ... many ruined lives. You will leave many of us homeless if you chop down this great birch tree.

Narrator: A mountain lion had been sleeping along a branch in the middle of the tree. Because his coat blended into the light and shadows of the tree, not one had noticed him. Now he leapt down and padded silently over to the sleeping woman. He growled in her ear.

Mountain Lion: Ikwe (woman) the great birch tree is home to many birds and animals. If you cut it down where will I find my dinner?

Narrator: A porcupine swung down from branch to branch and whispered to the woman.

Porcupine: Ikwe (woman), do you know what we animals and humans need in order to live? Oxygen. And, Ikwe (woman), do you know what trees produce? Oxygen! If you cut down the forest you will destroy that which gives us life.

Narrator: The porcupine continued.

Porcupine: Ikwe (woman), you are chopping down this tree with no thought for the future. And surely you know that what happens tomorrow depends upon what you do today. You must think of our children, who tomorrow must live in a world without trees.

Narrator: The frog spoke once again to the Ikwe (woman) in her deep and lazy voice.

Frog: Ikwe (woman) how much is beauty worth? Can you live without it? If you destroy the beauty of the forest, on what would you feast your eyes?

Narrator: A child who lived with his family in the forest knelt over the sleeping woman. He murmured in her ear.

Boy: Ikwe (woman), when you awake, please look upon us with all new eyes.

Narrator: The woman awoke with a start. Before her stood the forest child, and all around him, staring, were the creatures who depended upon the great birch tree.

Birch Tree: What wondrous animals they were! The woman looked about and saw the sun streaming through the trees. Spots of bright light glowed like jewels amidst the dark green forest. The woman smelled the fragrant smell of the forest. She felt the morning mist rising from the forest floor. But she heard no sound, for the creatures were strangely silent. The woman stood and picked up her ax. She swung back and looked at the animals and the child. She hesitated. Then dropped the ax and walked out of the forest.