

SIX TRAIT WRITING GUIDE FOR



Adventure Annie Goes to Kindergarten

by Toni Buzzeo; illustrated by Amy Wummer
Dial Books for Young Readers, 2010

IDEAS: Illustration Predictions

Before reading *Adventure Annie Goes to Kindergarten* share Amy Wummer's illustrations with students without reading the text. Ask them to try to determine the Main Idea of the story through illustrations alone. What might the author's message be?

IDEAS: Hunting for Details

Good writers plant details in their writing that make their stories fun to imagine and easy to understand. Good illustrators illustrate those details and add additional details of their own. (Note: Details are small and specific things that make us notice them.) Take students on a detail hunt in *Adventure Annie Goes to Kindergarten*. What details early in the story (from the time Annie wakes up at home until Mr. Todd leads her to her seat at the red table) let us know that Annie is going to be looking for adventures in Kindergarten? List these details. Next to each detail, tell who included it: the author, the illustrator, or both.

ORGANIZATION: Three is the Ideal Number

Begin your discussion of the **Pattern of Three** in children's stories

with a retelling of *The Three Pigs* and discuss the organization of this familiar **Pattern of Three** story. Next, encourage students to think of other stories that employ a **Pattern of Three** in which the main character tries and fails, tries and fails, and finally tries and succeeds (or, alternately, tries and fails, tries and fails, tries and fails, then ultimately succeeds). Ask them to apply this idea to *Adventure Annie Goes to Kindergarten*. What is Annie hoping to have in Kindergarten? (HINT: Adventures!) How many times does she try and what does she do each time? After some discussion, help students to write a (group or individual) summary using the following template.

Annie has a problem. She wants _____.

First, she tries to have a _____
adventure, but _____.

Then, she tries to have a _____
adventure, but _____.

Finally, she tries to _____
and then _____.

ORGANIZATION: Adventure Annie Stars Again

After completing the "Three is the Ideal Number" activity, invite students, individually or as a group depending on their age level, to create another Adventure Annie story using the same **Pattern of Three** they identified above. Ask them to begin by summarizing the new story using the same template. Then, invite them to write and illustrate the new story. For group endeavors, consider asking each student to illustrate a single page and assemble the pages into a complete story.

VOICE: Whose Story Is It?

Engage students in a discussion of **Point of View** in *Adventure Annie Goes to Kindergarten*. Who is telling this story? Who is the "I" (narrator) as we read? If you listen to the things Annie says, you can get a pretty good idea of who she is and what she is like because she speaks with a distinctive **voice**. Ask students to choose interesting sentences that Annie speaks. If she weren't such a lively, interesting girl, how might she say each of these things? Ask students to rephrase the sentences to imagine that Annie was a cranky girl, a sad girl, a sassy girl, etc.

VOICE: How Would Mr. Todd Tell the Story?

Adventure Annie Goes to Kindergarten is narrated in first person by Annie. Throughout the story we hear Annie's **voice**. We hear her particular expressions, and her personality shines through. But what if Mr. Todd had been telling the story? Engage your students in an exercise focused on **voice** by retelling parts of the story from Mr. Todd's **Point of View**. Ask students to give him interesting words and expressions that let us know what *he* is like.

WORD CHOICE: Wild about Verbs

Discuss the function of verbs in writing. Give students a few examples of these action words and then ask them to suggest several of their own. After you have a long list, ask student to consider synonyms for these verbs, telling them that the more surprising their synonyms are, the better. List these next to the original verbs on your list. Finally, re-read *Adventure Annie Goes to Work* aloud and ask your students to raise one hand when they hear an ordinary verb and two hands when they hear a more unusual, interesting, or exciting verb.

WORD CHOICE: Invent Your Own

Once in a while, Annie can't find an ordinary word that suits her purpose, so she simply invents one of her own. After reading both *Adventure Annie Goes to Kindergarten* and *Adventure Annie Goes to Work*, make word cards for her invented words and put them on a classroom INVENTED WORD Wall. Invite your students to make up one invented word each day. Encourage them to create words that make use of some part of other words to which they are related so that everyone will understand their meaning.

SENTENCE FLUENCY: Break It Up or Keep it Long?

One of the longest sentences in *Adventure Annie Goes to Kindergarten* is:

I squizzle back to my room and tuck my zookeeper hat, my high wire slippers, and my walkie-talkies into my backpack—just in case.

After discussing the advantages of varying sentence length and including some long sentences like this one, read the sentence in context from the story. Now write it on chart paper or the white board so that students can see it. Help students to rewrite it as a series of short sentences. Now, read the page again, first with the original long sentence, then with the short sentences. Ask students which their ears prefer and why.

SENTENCE FLUENCY: Scouting for Short Sentences

Introduce your students to the idea that the best writing uses a variety of sentence structures and lengths by sharing an example that does not employ variety. For example, what if *Adventure Annie Goes to Kindergarten* began like this:

I hear Mommy at my door in the morning.
Mommy sings, "Rise and shine, Adventure Annie."
I hop to my calendar and think 'At last!'
I am glad it is Adventure Annie Kindergarten day.

Instead of like this:

"Rise and shine, Adventure Annie," Mommy sings at my door.
I hop to my calendar.
At last!
Adventure Annie Kindergarten day.

Discuss the advantages of the second example (taken from the text). Then, ask your students to go on a "Short Sentence Hunt" for sentences that are two, three, and four words long. (Note: It may be helpful to use a document camera for this activity so that you can project the text for students to see as you read.)

CONVENTIONS: Punctuation Location

Ask students to share what they know about exclamation points and question marks. Reinforce correct knowledge and refine understanding as needed. Then, give each student either a laminated oaktag question mark or a laminated oaktag exclamation point. (Note: Make the two sets of punctuation marks from two different colors. Use a die cut machine if possible.) As you read *Adventure Annie Goes to Work*, ask students to raise their punctuation marks whenever they see one in the text that matches the one they are holding. (Note: It may be helpful to use a document camera for this activity so that you can project the text for students to see as you read.) At the end of the reading, discuss the work that each punctuation mark does in the story.