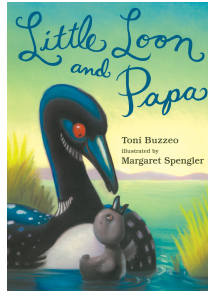


## SIX TRAIT WRITING GUIDE



### *Little Loon and Papa*

by Toni Buzzeo; illustrated by Margaret Spengler  
Dial Books for Young Readers, 2003

#### **IDEAS: Who Lives There?**

Little Loon lives in a north woods ecosystem. While searching for his Papa, he encounters three mammals along the shore. Invite students to think of another ecosystem with which they are familiar, a baby animal that lives there, and three animals that he or she might encounter while looking for his or her Papa.

#### **ORGANIZATION: At Papa's Side**

From the outset, the reader knows that Little Loon must overcome his fear of diving and be transformed. At the first turning point in the story, he swims away from his Papa to avoid his fear. In the interior sequence (which uses a pattern of three structure), he searches for this Papa and dives when he finally finds him. Ask students to imagine that Little Loon does NOT swim away. How might the story unfold, still using a pattern of three structure where Little Loon tries and fails, tries, and fails, tries and succeeds without ever leaving Papa's side?

#### **VOICE: Matching Voice**

Begin by discussing first person versus third person narration with your students. Even though *Little Loon and Papa* employs a third person narrator, the **voice** of the story is informed by Little Loon's character/personality. Ask students to list words that describe Little

Loon's character and emotions. (Note: it may be helpful to compare him with a more rambunctious character such as Annie in *Adventure Annie Goes to Work* and *Adventure Annie Goes to Kindergarten*). Once you have discussed his character and emotion, ask students whether the voice of the story matches Little Loon's personality and emotion. Does the story have a quiet voice?

#### **SENTENCE FLUENCY: How Does it Sound to You?**

Remind students that one of the important tools that authors employ in their writing—especially for picture books that are read aloud—is sentence fluency. They use sentences of varying lengths. They use lyrical language that flows easily. And they use carefully chosen repetition. Begin by asking students to go on a repetition hunt as you read the story for a second time. What elements of the text are repeated? List them on chart paper. Then, divide students into groups and assign each group one of the "chunks" of repetition to join in on as you read the story again for a third time. What effect does repetition have on their enjoyment of the story?

#### **WORD CHOICE: What's that Sound?**

When Little Loon encounters each large animal, the moose, the bear, and the beaver, Toni Buzzeo uses three sound words to capture what Little Loon hears. Challenge students to come up with additional words for each animal (using nonfiction books about each if they need ideas). To extend this activity, if you have completed the Ideas activity above, challenge them to create three sound words for each animal they have selected from their chosen ecosystem.

#### **CONVENTIONS:**

Toni Buzzeo adds to the excitement of the story by using exclamation points. Begin by going on a hunt for them and write each sentence on chart paper or a white board. Next, read each sentence first with, and then without, the exclamation point. Discuss why the author decided to use the punctuation mark in each location. How does it affect the experience of listening to the story?