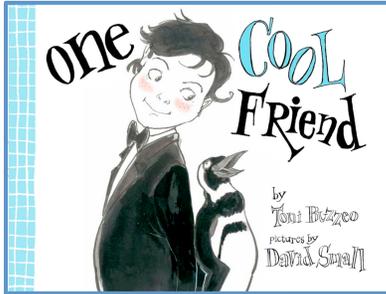


SIX TRAIT WRITING GUIDE



One Cool Friend

by Toni Buzzeo; illustrated by David Small
Dial Books for Young Readers, 2012

IDEAS: Where Do Ideas Come From?

Toni Buzzeo's idea for *One Cool Friend* came from an urban legend about a boy stealing a penguin from the New England Aquarium. After she borrowed that idea, her challenge was to add effective details to bring the story to life.

Send your students on a hunt for effective details in the text. Make a list of these details. Once you have an exhaustive list, return to each item and ask why each detail enhances the original idea Toni began with.

If time allows, return to the book and search for details that are not in the text but that illustrator David Small has added. Ask students to discuss the ways David's details convey more information to the reader and increase the humor of the story

ORGANIZATION: And Then What?

One Cool Friend employs a simple chronological structure. Invite students to go on a chronology hunt in the text, searching for phrases that indicate the passage of time such as, "On Saturday morning . . ." Make a list and then ask students to determine how much time passes from the beginning to the end of the book.

VOICE: Whose Point of View?

Once you have discussed the ending of *One Cool Friend* and each student has formed an opinion about what the father knew or did not know as the story unfolded, introduce or review the concept of point of view. Discuss the fact that the current story is told from Elliot's point of view and so we understand how he feels and thinks about events in the story.

Now, ask each student to imagine that the story is told from Elliot's father's point of view. How will it change the story? Prepare students to rewrite the story from this other point of view.

For younger students, you will want to complete this writing project as a group activity, but for more skilled writers, it will be fun to encourage each to write their own version of the story.

Supply the following story starter:

Mr. _____ was a very _____ man/father.

So when he read in the newspaper that it was Family Fun Day at the aquarium, he thought . . .

Ask students to pick up the story from Dad's point of view. Remind them that they are allowed to imagine what he thinks and feels as events unfold, but that we cannot know what Elliot is thinking or feeling!

SENTENCE FLUENCY: How Long Shall We Talk?

Ask students to search for all of the dialogue in *One Cool Friend*, pointing out that it is enclosed in speech bubbles. Make a list of each spoken remark with a double space to indicate when a new conversation begins. Once the list is complete, ask students to discuss the length of conversations in the book. How many times do characters volley conversation back and forth? Are conversations shorter than they usually are in your classroom? Why is this? Does it leave space for more humor in the book?

WORD CHOICE: Proper Speech

We learn on the first page of *One Cool Friend* that "Elliot is a very proper young man." After ensuring that students know what the word "proper" means and what it implies, re-read the book aloud, asking students to stop the reading with raised hands each time Elliot says something that proves that he is proper in his speech as well as his actions. Make a list of the things Elliot says. Then challenge students to imagine that Elliot is less proper, perhaps more like themselves. How would they rephrase or rewrite Elliot's remarks in this case?

CONVENTIONS: Bubble Up!

Illustrator David Small decided to add speech bubbles to all of the dialogue in *One Cool Friend*, making it very easy to locate dialogue in the text. Begin by sending students on a dialogue hunt. Now ask them to notice that some of the speech bubbles are differently formatted. Make a list of these and then, while studying them in context, ask students to discuss why David might have used different formatting for them.