

Example Lesson Plan: Fanfiction

For Grades 4–6

Fanfiction is a genre of writing in which writers craft a story that borrows elements from an existing book, movie, TV show, or other intellectual property. Writing fanfiction stories can help students practice writing skills such as crafting a narrative, dialogue writing, and more. It also encourages students to engage more deeply with the source text, as the creation of good fanfiction requires a thorough understanding of narrative elements such as character, plot, and theme. Additionally, the fanfiction community provides an opportunity for young writers to share their work on forums and websites dedicated to fanfiction and receive feedback while also providing tips for others. Thus, this style of writing is an excellent opportunity for students to write for a genuine audience and practice giving and receiving feedback.

This example lesson plan models teaching students how to craft their own fanfiction stories, based on a book of their choosing. Then, students are guided through the process of providing peer feedback in groups of two or three.

The text of this lesson plan is intended to serve as an example of what a fanfiction lesson might look like. It is not intended to be read to students verbatim. Rather, teachers should feel empowered to use the example plan as an outline for building their own unique lesson. That said, scripted explanations of terms, concepts, and activities can be used as desired.

Fanfiction Writing Example Lesson

Grades 4-6

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Materials: lesson plan, teacher copy of [“The Fox and the Stork”](#) or a different short text, copies of [“The Three Little Pigs”](#) or a different short text, [Sequencing Graphic Organizer](#), [Peer Feedback Form](#), pencils and paper, projector, and whiteboard

Additional resource: Looking for fanfiction activities for older or more advanced students? See our [Fanfiction Writing Prompts](#) for ideas.

Have you ever read a story that didn't end the way you wanted it to? Or have you ever wanted to know more about what happened before the story began? There is a type of writing called “fanfiction,” or “fanfic” for short, in which writers create a story that answers “what if” questions related to a book they have read. For example, someone might write about what happens to a secondary character or create a new story that takes place after the book ends. Fanfiction is meant to be a positive outlet for readers to expand upon the stories they enjoy reading. Today, we are going to read the short story “The Fox and the Stork.” Then, we are going to discuss the story together as a class and brainstorm ideas to write about. Then, each of you will have the opportunity to write your own fanfiction story related to this tale.

Read the story “The Fox and the Stork” out loud to the class. As a class, discuss the events of the story using the [Sequencing Graphic Organizer](#) to keep track of important information.

Let's review the key elements of this story.

Who can name some of the main characters in this story? [Fill in graphic organizer.]

Next, who can describe the setting of the story? [Fill in graphic organizer.]

Now we are going to outline the events of the story. Who can tell me what happens at the beginning of the story? What happens in the middle? What happens at the end? [Fill in graphic organizer.]

Modeling

We can use the elements in our graphic organizer to come up with ideas for a fanfiction story based on this folktale. First, pick a character for your story to focus on. For this example, I'm going to use the Stork. [Circle "Stork" on graphic organizer].

I want to make sure that the Stork in my story is similar to the Stork in the original text. In the original story, I see that the Stork is described as a "calm, even-tempered fellow," so I would not want to write a story where he got angry or yelled at the other characters. [On graphic organizer, next to "Stork," write "calm" and "even-tempered."] Also, I notice that the original Stork uses elegant language when he speaks at the end of the story. I will make sure that my Stork also uses fancy vocabulary and elegant sentence structures when he talks. [Write "fancy language" on graphic organizer].

Next, we need to decide when the story will take place. We have three options. A fanfiction story can occur before the events of the original text [put a star before "Beginning"], after the events of the original text [put a star after "End"], or right in the middle of things [underline the events of the graphic organizer].

If I wanted to tell a story that took place before the text, I might write about what the stork was doing before the fox invited him to dinner. Or, I could tell a story about what the stork does after he tricks the Fox. My last option would be to tell a story that takes place during the original text. To do this, I would need to show a scene that the text skips over, expand on an idea from the text, or rewrite the events of the original story.

I really like the story of the Fox and the Stork. However, I don't really like that the Stork decides to take revenge on the Fox at the end. In my opinion, that is not a very nice thing to do. Because of this, I am going to set my story during the original text. [Indicate this on graphic organizer]. I am going to rewrite the last events of this story to fit what I think the Stork should do.

This is an example of a story I could write that meets these requirements. Pay attention to how I combine elements from the original story with my own unique ideas.

[Read the following example story to the class]

The Stork was very frazzled and hurt by what the Fox had done. And so, he decided to hold a group meeting with the other animals that have been tricked by the Fox. They all sat around a large table and debated on what the Stork should do. Many of the animals suggested playing a mean trick on the Fox, just like he had done to them. They all yelled and shouted their ideas.

"Let's trick him back," croaked the Frog.

"Let's never talk to him again!" brayed the Donkey.

"Everyone quiet down," said the Stork, "If we prank and belittle the Fox, how are we any better than he is?"

"Then what are we supposed to do?" meowed the Cat.

"It's simple," said the Stork. "We have to treat the Fox the way we want to be treated: with kindness and respect."

The next day, the Stork visited the Fox.

"All of us animals are gathering for dinner tonight," said the Stork. "Would you care to join us?"

The Fox's eyes narrowed suspiciously. "What's the catch?" he asked.

"No catch," said the Stork. "We just want to enjoy your company and get to know you better!"

The Fox was curious, so that night he crept over to the Stork's house. He was nervous, and kept waiting for the other animals to take revenge for the tricks he had played on them.

However, as the night progressed, no tricks came. Suddenly, the Fox began to feel a strange, creeping sensation in his tummy. Then, he started to cry.

"What's wrong Fox?" asked the Stork.

"I just feel so guilty," said the Fox. "I've been so mean to you all, and yet you still treat me with respect and kindness. Why?"

"It's the golden rule," said the Stork. "Treat others the way you want to be treated. I want to be treated with kindness, so that's how I'm treating you!"

The Stork handed the Fox a handkerchief to dry his tears. Then the Fox began to smile.

"You know what, Stork? You're right. We should treat others the way we want to be treated. From this day forward, I promise never to trick another animal again!"

All the animals cheered and gathered around the Fox for a big group hug. And the Fox kept his word; from that day forward, he never tricked another animal again.

The end.

In this example, I created a new story that used many existing elements from the original tale. For example, in the original text, it says that the Stork is a "calm, even-tempered fellow." I show this in my story by having the Stork keep the other animals in check. Also, my Stork uses elegant language and fancy vocabulary words, just like the Stork in the original. In fanfiction, it is important to give the characters the same personality as they have in the original text, even if the events you come up with are new and different, like they are in my story.

Now, let's try it together. Do we all know the story of The Three Little Pigs [or another familiar story]? Let's practice writing a short fanfiction story related to The Three Little Pigs.

First, let's make a list of characters. Who can name one of the main characters in The Three Little Pigs? [Students answer. Fill out a new graphic organizer with the three pigs and the Big Bad Wolf.]

Great! Next, let's outline the events of the story. What happens at the beginning of the story? [The pigs build their houses]. What happens in the middle of the story? [The wolf tries to blow down the houses]. And what happens at the end of the story? [The pigs defeat the wolf].

Perfect. Now, we're ready to write our fanfiction story. First, we need to pick a main character. Which character should we choose? [Mark that character on the graphic organizer].

And when should our story take place? Before, after, or during the events we just wrote down? [Mark the class choice on the graphic organizer].

Excellent! Now we can write our story. I'll do the first sentence. [Write and speak a sentence beginning with "Once upon a time..."]. What happens next? [Encourage students to generate 4–5 sentences to complete this brief story, giving prompts as needed (see below).]

Independent Practice

Now it's your turn to write a fanfiction story. You can base your story on any book or fairy tale you enjoy. Remember to follow the three steps we discussed. First, pick a character from the original text to focus on. Second, decide whether your story will happen before, after, or during the events of the text. And third, write your story, remembering to make your characters similar to the original text.

[Prompts for those struggling to come up with ideas might include:

"What would happen if...?"

"I think the story would be better if it ended with..."

"What was this character doing before the story started?"

"What does this character do after the story ends?"

"I wish that the story had told me more about..."

"What if the story took place in...?"

"What if this character was...?"]

Feedback

[To be completed once students have finished their stories. This could occur after a period of writing time or in a separate class period].

Oftentimes, fanfiction writers receive feedback from their peers to help them improve their writing. We are going to use our fanfiction stories to practice giving and receiving peer feedback. [Put students in groups of 2–3.]

First, I want you to read your partner’s fanfiction story. Pay close attention to the quality of the writing. What details do they use? Are there spelling or grammar mistakes? Is the story well-organized and easy to follow?

[After students have read each other’s work, hand out copies of the Peer Feedback Form].

Now, we are going to provide some feedback. First, write down one thing that you really liked about your partner’s story. This could be related to the plot, the details, the creativity, or the quality of the writing.

Next, write down one question you have for the writer. For example, you might ask why a character made a certain decision or why they decided to use a certain word choice.

Last, you are going to circle one skill area that your partner could improve on. Write one sentence explaining what your partner could do to improve on this area the next time they write.

Now, give your feedback form back to your partner. Take a moment to read the feedback you have received. Then, write one to three sentences at the bottom of the page explaining how you will use this feedback to improve on your next writing assignment.