The Life of a Seashell

Have your students explore the writing process by imagining the life of a seashell. This neat writing lesson features The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle, seashells, and tons of creative storytelling fun.

Learning Objectives

Students will be able to write a simple story with events in chronological order.

Materials and Preparation

- The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle
- Seashells
- Chart paper

Key Terms:

- chronological

Lesson

Introduction (15 minutes)

- Tell the students that today they are going to learn how to use their imaginations to write a story.
- Introduce the word "chronological" by listing three events on the board out of order. You can list three things that kids normally do during the day, such as "go to school," "do homework," and "eat dinner."
- Discuss with students what order these events happen in. Explain to them that the order in which events actually happened is called chronological order.
- Read students The Very Hungry Caterpillar (which has an easy-to-follow chronology) and discuss the order of the story after reading.
Explicit Instruction/Teacher Modeling (15 minutes)

- Draw a flow map on the board, and explain to students that the flow map is an excellent tool to use when preparing to write a story in chronological order.
- Generate a simple story line with the students' input regarding what happens to the butterfly that used to be the "hungry caterpillar." Fill in the boxes with ideas in correct order.

Guided Practice/Interactive Modeling (30 minutes)

- Give each student a seashell.
- Ask students to think about the story of this seashell. Prompt their thinking by asking questions about where the shell could be from, what animal may have lived in it, etc.
- Have students draw their own flow maps with 4-5 boxes each. Have them fill the maps in with their ideas about where the seashell started, how its journey went, which beach it was collected on, and so on.
- Once students have finished their flow maps, model how the flow map can be used to write a short story. Add in details and transitional phrases such as "in the beginning," "next," and "later on."
- Write a story using the flow map created about the butterfly to display for the students on the chart paper.

Independent Working Time (30 minutes)

- Ask students to use their flow maps to write the story of their seashell’s life.

Extend

Differentiation

- **Enrichment:** Have advanced students illustrate their story.
- **Support:** Allow struggling students to write only one or two sentences for each of their boxes in their flow map.
Review

Assessment *(10 minutes)*

- To assess the learning for this assignment, read the students' stories and determine their understanding of chronology and imaginative storytelling. Note whether the stories are in order and make sense.

Review and Closing *(10 minutes)*

- In closing the lesson, ask students why chronological order is important in stories.