

Power Lessons - Year 3

Plot: Problem and Solution

Objective: To help students identify problems and solutions as plot elements.

Materials: Any story or novel you have recently read to students that has a clear problem and solution in the plot, such as *Jumanji* by Chris Van Allsburg

Lesson: 1. Present the following problem to students:

You and a friend are walking home from school. Suddenly, from behind some bushes, a huge dog lunges at you, barking and growling. What do you do?

Encourage students to suggest possible solutions to the problem.

2. Remind students that what happens in a story is called the *plot* of the story. Explain that the plots of many stories are organised around a problem and a solution. Draw the following T-Chart on the board. Under “Problem”, write *There is a mean dog blocking my way home.* Under “Solution”, write one of the solutions suggested by students.

<i>Problem</i>	<i>Solution</i>
<i>There is a mean dog blocking my way home.</i>	

3. Read aloud the book you have chosen. Stop reading just before the story’s problem is solved. In *Jumanji* for example, stop reading just before Judy reaches *Jumanji*. Draw another T-chart on the board and ask, “What is the problem in this story?” Discuss student’s responses and complete the “Problem” side of the chart.
4. Tell students that one of the reasons people keep reading a book is to find out how a problem is solved. Ask, “How do you think Peter and Judy will solve this problem? Discuss the students’ responses but do not record them on the chart.
5. Finish reading the book. Ask, “How was the problem of the wild animals and disasters solved?” Note that longer books may have chapters or groups of chapters that contain small problems and solutions of their own.
6. Tell students that identifying the main problem, thinking of possible solutions, and discovering the actual solutions in stories will help them better understand and enjoy what they read.

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Status of the Class

Follow up: As you take the Status of the Class, ask:

- What is the main problem in the story (or part of story) you are reading?
- How do you think the problem will be solved?
- What was the last story or novel you read? What was the problem? What was the solution?

Added Practice: Encourage students to complete T-charts for other books they have read. Post the diagrams, but do not give the titles of the books. Challenge the class to figure out each book's title by reading the information given in the diagram.

As students read independently, have them record their predications of how a story will end. Invite them to use one of their incorrect predictions to write a different ending for the story, using an alternative solution to the problem.