PICTUREBOOKS - CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND CREATIVE WRITING

USING CHILDREN'S PICTUREBOOKS AS:

PART A - A SOURCE FOR CRITICAL ANALYSIS IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL - GRADE 11

PART B - A STIMULUS FOR CREATIVE WRITING IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL - GRADE 11

By

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A Project

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Master of Arts (Teaching)

McMaster University

April, 1982

MASTER OF ARTS (TEACHING) (1982)
(English)

McMASTER UNIVERSITY
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Using Children's Picturebooks as:

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PART B - A Stimulus for Creative Writing in the Secondary School - Grade 11

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NUMBER OF PAGES: vii, 106

ABSTRACT

This unit is designed for approximately six weeks of English classes at the grade eleven level of secondary school. It incorporates both skills of critical analysis and of creative writing that are part of the grade eleven syllabus in Ontario.

Part A of the unit provides for the reading and study of several picturebooks written for children. It offers an analytical and critical approach to reading as well as the appreciation of a literary genre designed for another age group. Picturebooks provide variety in curriculum focus and are a relatively uncomplicated yet mature form for investigation and criticism. They allow students to consider several concepts as well: picturebooks are a specific and distinct genre; they provide a source for critical examination; they reflect customs, attitudes, biases and values; they require the reader's personal appraisal; and finally, children's books both teach and entertain.

In Part B, the designing and writing of a picturebook provide opportunities for students to: develop creativity and ingenuity through a personal writing activity; demonstrate their degree of mastery of basic composition skills; exercise the imagination; practise the mechanics of the writing process; participate in peer assessment and self-assessment; study the

rudiments of good writing through a productive and purposeful activity; and receive instant and continuous feedback from their classmates and the teacher as writing progresses. Most importantly, however, in Part B, students learn that personal satisfaction can be gained through producing something, not only for oneself, but also for others.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many hours have been expended in the development of this English curriculum unit, submitted as my project for completion of the M.A.(T) Programme. It has been a privilege and pleasure to work with both Dr. Catherine Beattie and Dr. S.M. Najm, Chairman of the M.A.(T)-M.Sc.(T) Programme during my graduate work in teaching. Special thanks are due Dr. Najm and Professor Petrie of the English Department for the advice and supervision they offered and for the time they gave to reading and re-reading the manuscript.

To my typist, Vera Koledin, an efficient and very knowledgeable lady, I express both appreciation and admiration for a job well done.

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INTRODUCTION

PREAMBLE

In planning a teaching unit that includes not only the critical study of a literary genre, but also language development, it seems to me to be entirely appropriate to begin by exploring current understanding of what language is "all about" and to consider the role of language in the process of learning.

The recent Language Across the Curriculum document released by the Ontario Ministry of Education begins with the statement that, "Language is the means by which individuals process experience and give meaning to it, both for themselves and for others."[1] But George Mead, writing in 1934 and quoted in a recent book entitled, Language, the Learner, and the School offered perhaps the most succinct definition. He maintained that, "Language puts the intelligence of the individual at his own disposal."[2] When he can both articulate and manipulate language for his own purposes, he contributes significantly to ordering and directing his environment. For this reason, curriculum specialists in designing programmes of study, must not only understand what is meant by "language", but must also develop lessons and lesson materials that demonstrate its uses.

Perhaps the most obvious language function is that of communication: we use language to determine and control the behaviour of other persons; to receive and transmit knowledge

and information about our world; to develop and maintain social interactions; and to share attitudes and feelings with other persons around us. Thus we are functioning in a milieu in which messages constantly are being transmitted and apprehended.

But, in addition, we use language for learning. When students in school receive information, in any form, they must figuratively cut it up and rearrange it to make sense out of it. The whole structure does not get "taken in". Different persons take in different things and re-structure them in their own minds. When we sort out and organize our thoughts and ideas, either in our heads or on paper, we discover what we know and what we need to find out.

In our schools, we commonly refer to the "four language arts": reading; writing; listening; and speaking. While the learner is not consciously classifying language in this way, these categories are arbitrary descriptions useful for distinguishing among four of the processes of communication. In effect, the four are interrelated. If a student writes a story, and reads it to his neighbours to get their response, the entire activity involves reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Students need to be involved constantly in an exchange in which they both receive messages (listening and reading) and send them (speaking and writing). All processes must be built into the curriculum design so that no one aspect of language is short-changed. Perhaps it is useful to consider

each of the language arts in turn with respect to what I believe to be essential in the syllabus.

Listening

Language learning begins with listening and yet listening is one area of the curriculum that traditionally has received little attention. Listening is really reading. It is "reading sound". Skills applicable to reading are also instrumental to listening, for when we listen, the brain is receiving messages via the ear instead of the eye. But listening is more than hearing. Obviously, most children can hear when they are born, but we have to teach them how to listen.

From the primary grades to secondary school graduation, listening requirements become increasingly more complex and diversified so that activities will be needed to extend powers of concentration and to challenge students' intellectual abilities.

Lessons should be incorporated into curriculum to teach youngsters "how" to listen: for information and knowledge; for enjoyment and the exercise of the imagination; for discriminating between fact and opinion, the important and the unimportant, the emotional and the rational; and for following argument of varying degrees of complexity. All of these develop over a long period of time and must not be left to chance as though, somehow, they will occur naturally.

But before deciding on precisely what to include in a programme of language study, the curriculum planners need to

ask at least one important question: "What kind of listener do we want to develop?" The answer might include the following: one who not only knows how to listen but actually does; is selective in his choice of what he listens to; can identify the main ideas and the significant details of what he hears; distinguishes between fact and opinion; concentrates on the speaker's motives and purposes and is not misled by "catch phrases", propaganda or emotionally loaded words; is analytical, and can organize, categorize and summarize what he hears; is courteous and considerate; is attentive; remembers what he hears and adds it to his present knowledge; and finally, enjoys the beauty to be found in hearing the English language spoken or read well.

Speaking

A second area of the language arts curriculum that is often neglected is speaking: both learning to speak confidently and well, and how to use speech as a valuable tool for learning.

Many young persons are embarrassed both to speak in public and to offer opinions or judgments to others in a group situation. No doubt they previously have experienced little success and will not risk attention. Activities which require these students to read aloud to their peers or to younger pupils provide a vehicle, not only for enjoying the beauty of the spoken word, but also for practising the oral skills of pitch, tone, speed, volume, and intonation. When the student is able to read with confidence, perhaps the next step is to

speak more formally from prepared text or personal notes.

> When we consider the working day in a secondary school, the neglect of pupil talk as a valuable means to learning stands out sharply. To bring about a change will take time and persistence. Where pupil talk has been accorded little status in teaching methods, it is not surprising that when the opportunity does occur it tends to be filled by pointless chatter. But the cycle can be broken, as experience has amply shown. For talk to flourish, the context must be as informal and relaxed as possible, and this is most likely to occur in small groups and in a well-organized and controlled classroom. Once the practice has been established in such groups, there is no reason why the exploratory talk should not succeed in due course with the whole class and the teacher together. The principle to be recognized, however, is that good "class discussion" cannot be had simply on demand; it must be built up on work in small groups and continue to be supported by it.[3]

For far too long the teacher has been the source of knowledge in the classroom. Students absorb and rehearse the knowledge presented to them. The teacher, syllabus in hand, determines what is to be learned. Little thought is given to student talk; however, this pedagogy is beginning to change. We now realize that we can gain a great deal of information about what concepts have or have not been grasped by listening to students discuss what they have been studying. The teacher has come to realize that they learn from one another and have questions that need answering, questions that the teacher perhaps has not considered. Thus what we believe to be the content and direction of a lesson may change drastically after listening to student discussion.

The problem for the teacher becomes, "What kind of speaker do I want to develop?" He must have confidence in

presenting what he has to say in an informal situation, both fluently and easily. He should participate in general classroom discussion in order to contribute to, and learn from, other students. To be a good contributor he needs to learn to be precise and concise allowing other persons in the group the opportunity to share their ideas as well.

Reading

We read from the time we open our eyes in the morning until we go to sleep at night. The North American Indian read signs from the forest that told him what animals were nearby, and told him the severity of the winter approaching. Early navigators of the globe read the stars and the wind directions to help them find their way over the seas. A tutored eye reads a painting; it reads the time and key signatures, the notes and rests of a musical composition. We read people's faces and body language and we read the weather before we begin each day. What I am arguing is that reading is an integral part of everything we do.

Reading is thinking set in motion by a stimulus; it is not a subject in the curriculum taught only by the English teacher, but a process by which we involve ourselves in a subject. Good reading is a constant search for meaning, for at first we perceive, then we comprehend, and then we react to what we learn. When we bring understanding to what merely has been deciphered, then we can say we have truly read.

But comprehension develops at three levels. At the literal level we determine what is explicitly stated.

Generally, questions that start with "who", "what", "when", "where", and "how many" begin literal comprehension questions. At the interpretive level we explore the implications of the material and use reasoning from the stated facts and details. Questions that begin with "how" and "why" require interpretive reading. Finally, we read at the critical level using our knowledge and experience to make evaluations and judgments about what we have read. Questions at this level require reasoning and may have no right or wrong answer.

Reading is a process that needs continuous refinement. It is not something that we "learn" in the primary grades and then tuck away in the recesses of the brain to be paraded out when needed. What takes place in the elementary grades of school is but the tip of the iceberg. Knowing how to scan and skim, how to read for study purposes as well as for recreation are some of the advanced reading skills.

Older students must know how to select the essential elements from what they read; they need to recognize bias and propaganda; they need to apply the proper reading rate to the purpose of the material, follow steps in a problem solving situation, detect fallacious reasoning, organize and classify information; and finally, critically appraise what they read, knowing what to evaluate and how to make judgments about it.

It is well to remember that each student has three reading levels: an independent level that is the level at which the material is easy for him to comprehend; an instructional level, which is the teaching level, material that is

challenging but comprehensible to him; and a frustration level that is to be avoided, for, depending on the student, material that is too difficult can do a great deal of damage to the positive reading attitude teachers are eager to maintain. At this level the student reads so poorly that comprehension is inadequate. The material is so difficult that it does little more than demoralize him.

As the student matures in his reading capabilities, and certainly by the time he enters secondary school, he should begin formally to study literature, building a critical vocabulary and reading stories, novels, poetry, and plays with a view to making personal responses: comparing characters and settings; noting and discussing choice of diction; identifying qualities of character; examining the purpose, point of view, and intended audience of the author or poet; interpreting colloquial language; attributing reasons for behaviour; recognizing and appreciating figurative language; et cetera. Obviously, the student in grade nine is not expected to have either the maturity, or the experience in appreciation of an eighteen year old leaving secondary school; but the high school programme should provide for the development of critical comment.

By the time a student graduates from grade thirteen in our school system, he should have confidence in: determining the writer's purpose; identifying the form of the writing; deciding whether or not the material is fact, fiction, opinion or interpretation; deciding whether or not it is worth reading;

determining why the writer selected the style and language he uses; identifying the tone of the writing; recognizing fallacious reasoning; recognizing particular persuasive devices; and, finally, appreciating plot and character development and their significance to the piece.

Likewise the student learns to appreciate that critical reading requires concentrated, reflective, and analytical thought.

Writing

Writing is the area of the curriculum that needs most attention today in our public schools. In 1980, a secondary school writing survey was done in York Borough by Frank McTeague, Language Arts Co-ordinator for the Board of Education for the Borough of York, working with a team of researchers from Toronto. He discovered some disturbing facts:

1. During the nine period study day, each student produced, on average, approximately two written items per day.

2. One of every three pieces of written work was mathematical and contained few words or sentences.

3. Approximately one-third of the students' writing was copied. In some subject areas as much as eighty-five per cent was copied. If the copied work is excluded from the total, the average amount per student is sixty pages of typed script for the school year.

4. Student writing is not only deficient in amount, is is also limited in variety or kind of writing. The audience for most of the writing was teacher-as-examiner. The purpose or function was either to record or to relay information. Eighty-five per cent of the items consisted of short answers, mathematics, test items, short notes, definitions, and simple exposition with limited use of reasoning or inference.

5. There is a discrepancy between the writing of students in secondary school and writing in the adult environment. Hand copying of written material is quite uncommon in the adult world but constitutes fully one-third of student work. Variety of function and audience is characteristic of adult writing, but most student writing is directed to the mastery of content and demonstration of such mastery for the teacher.[4]

In the early 1970's, in response to public concern over the state of English language education in the schools, a comprehensive study of language and learning was commissioned in Great Britain. In 1975, after four years of investigation, the team of eminent British researchers and educational practitioners presented the now famous Bullock Report.[5] One of the consistent themes of the report was that there was no evidence to support any one solution to the problems of language education.

Periodically, educational "gurus" appear who argue vehemently for one methodology over another, for a particular organizational procedure, or for particular teaching materials touted as being the answer to all conceivable problems. In fact, the Bullock investigators discovered no one remedy and no educational panacea that would cure all ills.

Experts, deemed "traditional", who favoured a heavy emphasis on the teaching of formal English grammar, were not prepared to argue that students be subjected constantly to an analytical examination of the language. At the same time, the so-called "progressives" were not about to discard components of a language programme that emphasized structure and organization in learning. The report found that polarities existed

more in the rhetoric practised by the educators rather than in actual classroom teaching.

During the late 1960's and early 1970's following the Plowden Report[6] in Britain and the Hall-Dennis Report[7] in Ontario the "me" generation in education got its start. In English composition this appeared as a pursuit of self-expression and self-awareness as ends in themselves. The finished product was valued, not for and of itself, but as a measure of the degree to which personhood was explored. Obviously this view altered dramatically the traditional view of writing for excellence of product, and learning in the process, the techniques of style, structure, and mechanical correctness that made excellence possible.

Perhaps the evidence of the Bullock Report recorded more unanimity in teaching methods than one might suppose, but pedagogical arguing and bickering have done more to retard good teacher training programmes in English education in the last fifteen years than any other single factor that I have experienced. The professional literature has been confusing, contradictory, and often misleading.

The young teacher in training has been caught between professors who promote a very structured, grammar-oriented, and teacher-directed approach to language which stresses excellence of product; and professors, often on the same faculty, who emphasize that teachers be most concerned with assisting self-expression and creativity as ends in themselves.

Glen Matott, an educator from Colorado State University,

in an article written in 1976 for the National Council of Teachers of English publication, College Composition and Communication, demonstrated that this dichotomy is not new to education when he referred to a quotation from a speech made by Martin Buber to an international educational conference in Heidelberg in 1925:

> He contrasted two modes of education, and found shortcomings in both. The older mode, he said, was characterized by the habit of authority, while the newer was characterized by the tendency to freedom. "The symbol of the funnel," he remarked, "is in course of being exchanged for that of the pump."[8]

Surely the teacher does not have to embrace either extreme. There is a third option. Of course the student strives for writing excellence, but he must do so realizing the teacher as a facilitator of this goal and not as merely the judge and jury. Youngsters must be able to speculate, hypothesize, "try ideas on for size", select, discard, organize, formulate, substitute and re-arrange in an atmosphere of trust. They need to understand that writing is a process, that all of the steps of the process are important and that often, excellence comes only after ample opportunity to draft and then redraft a piece of writing. By substituting, deleting, adding, and re-arranging words, phrases, sentences, and whole paragraphs, students learn to manipulate language and to gain confidence in their ability to express themselves on paper. Assessment becomes a continuous process from start to finish, not one that occurs only when the product is completed. Such ongoing criticism develops an atmosphere of trust between

student and teacher, with the student realizing that as writing develops, it finally takes shape and form.

Although articles in educational periodicals emphasize the writing process, a more balanced view between process and product is apparent in many classrooms. Matott expresses what is becoming, in the early 1980's, the predominant pedagogical position with regard to the teaching of composition:

> ... No doubt, writing is, at best, a liberating activity. Surely, too, it is admirable to insist that "the writing class should keep the individual student as its centre". And one has no fundamental objection, really, to viewing writing "as a creative process, of self-awareness and self-expression". One may insist, however, that the creative process entails a great deal more than self-awareness and self-expression. (To scream is self-expressive, but is it creative?) The creative process - especially if it is to achieve the highest order of self-expressiveness - also demonstrates command of techniques appropriate to the expressive/creative medium: and in the older pedagogy this is where the teacher came in - and not merely to "dictate", either.[9]

During the whole process, the teacher communicates the need for quality of ideas, quality of expression, with close attention to the mechanics and conventions of written form. What he is teaching, in effect, is a positive attitude toward the written word as a form of expression.

British and American educators have been doing a great deal of research in both oral and written language in the last five years. Names such as James Britton, Nancy Martin, Harold Rosen, Douglas Barnes, Janet Emig, and Donald Graves are synonymous with studies in the generation and acquisition of language.[10] Much of what is included in the next few pages

I have learned to appreciate by listening to them speak, from reading their research, and by participating in seminar sessions that several of them have conducted in Toronto and Vancouver.

All language development begins in oral form. Youngsters come to school with a language of their own that they have learned at home and in the company of their playmates. The school's job is to extend this natural or expressive language so that children realize that language has a variety of purposes and functions, and that they need to be able to make it work for them in a variety of ways.

The written code must be introduced in such a way that children perceive writing as a natural extension of their own speech. Many youngsters are unaware that writing is the process of putting what you think down on paper. This concept needs to be taught to them. Likewise, they are unaware that when they read from a page, it's someone's attempt to talk to them.

In the last five to seven years, research in language generation and acquisition has given teachers some startling information about the way in which we have traditionally approached language learning.[11] This research points out that the language of the school is language alien to children. It is the kind of language that is impersonal and structured. It is textbook language that is used formally to give information, persuade, and instruct. Since it is used to "get the world's work done" as it were, and since it is impersonal and

removed from the personal views or attitudes of the writer, it is a highly specialized form of writing. This kind of writing James Britton calls "transactional writing".

In order for it to communicate, transactional language must be passed on clearly and precisely. Children are not used to this kind of language when they come to school. They have trouble understanding it and they certainly have trouble reading and writing it. It is artificial to a child whose whole language thus far has been conversational, personal, and descriptive.

Older students unconsciously try to imitate textbook language when they write descriptions of how an event took place or how an activity was carried out. A youngster who encounters difficulty trying to write down how he conducted an experiment, very often has little difficulty describing orally what took place. His problem is that he unconsciously switches from the "easy" natural language of speech to the stilted and stylized form that he believes writing requires.

In all subjects, students should begin with "expressive writing" if they are ever going to be able to write easily, confidently, and well. Expressive language is what we use as our immediate vehicle of thought, for sorting out ideas, for communicating with close friends. We pass on information, ideas, and human feelings in this language. Thus it is a "warm" language and we use it ninety per cent of our time in conversation, personal notes, memos, letters, diaries, and journals.

Through expressive language, experience is internalized, and thus it is the language of learning. The emphasis is on the human being generating language, on the relationship between language and thinking. Moffet argues that the writer is at the centre of the activity and since he has to consider time, place, and audience, he should begin with the shortest distance possible: writing for himself.[12] At the elementary school level it is very important for children to have abundant opportunities to write using expressive language. In fact, it should not be neglected throughout the thirteen years of schooling. From the expressive language, teachers develop the more formal and specialized transactional language as the child matures and "subjects" are introduced. Both expressive and transactional language are important for the child to "control"; however, James Britton tells us that we introduce transactional language too soon and too often, and as a result, writing becomes a chore; it becomes difficult and something to be avoided.[13]

While teachers need to provide opportunities for expressive and transactional writing for their students, English, foreign language teachers and music teachers are concerned with the third language function - "poetic language". This is more formally planned or patterned than expressive writing and is more imaginative than transactional. It is language that has been consciously shaped or sculptured and is sometimes described as polished. Poetic language is removed from everyday speech. The issue of whether what is

being written is true or false is of no import.

Poetic language is not simply the language of poetry. It is the language of the storyteller who describes an experience at some distance and in the role of a spectator. Poetic language is speculative, since the user reflects and speculates on the event or experience while describing it.

Although poetic language is not what we use in conversation, children have less trouble producing it than they do transactional language.

Schools have traditionally over-emphasized transactional language to the detriment of other forms. In some content subject areas, transactional writing is most often requested, if indeed, any writing is required at all.

As teachers we need to take the pressure from our students in all aspects of reading/writing/listening/speaking. Transactional language that we require needs to be "for real", to be information transmitted that someone wants or needs to know.

The younger the child, the more expressive writing he should be doing, but it should be very evident in the total writing output of the secondary school student as well. Perhaps a chart is the best form for demonstrating the relationship among the three kinds of writing that comprise every student's writing programme.

Student maturity in writing develops from the EXPRESSIVE to the TRANSACTIONAL and POETIC

Transactional ←

Characteristics

- -highly specialized
- -must be clear & precise
- -artificial to children/ many adolescents
- -impersonal
- -structured
- -language of intellectual inquiry
- -language of instruction
- -language of persuading, arguing
- -language of trade, of planning and of reporting
- -the language of "getting something done"

Examples (formalized)

- -workbook activities
- -recording in history/ science/geography/ industrial arts
- -giving directions for games/recipes
- -reporting
- -editorials
- -classroom blackboard notes
- -answers to teacher directed questions (written answers)
- -essays
- -reviews
- -critiques
- -poetry/prose appreciations

Expressive →

Characteristics

- -rambling
- -unstructured
- -personal, sometimes hesitant
- -not synonymous with "creative writing"
- -immediate vehicle for thought
- -used to sort out ideas
- -used to communicate with friends
- -the LANGUAGE OF LEARNING
- -very like speech written down
- -means by which the "new" is explored

Examples (informal)

- -stories of young children
- -letters (personal)
- -diary and journal entries
- -eye witness account

Poetic

Characteristics

- -"creative writing"
- -true/false not important in this writing
- -not simply the language of poetry
- -imaginative
- -more formally planned or patterned than expressive language
- -polished language
- -removed from everyday speech
- -language of the storyteller

Examples

- -poetry
- -stories
- -play scripts
- -autobiographical account

The writer's understanding of the task and of the intended audience affects how he writes, for different forms of writing necessitate different language operations. As Mr. McTeague's research confirms, the students' concept of writing is very restricted in many classrooms.[14] The student writes for the teacher as examiner and he writes essays, tests, and answers to teacher-prepared questions. While these are important components of a programme, writing for "real" audiences seldom is included in the course of studies. Once he leaves school, the student will never again write for the teacher. But he may well write letters to the newspaper or to politicians, résumés to secure a job, summaries for an employer, or minutes for meetings. He may even write poems and stories, not only for himself, but for others to read. What he needs from time spent in school is the opportunity to write for a variety of audiences, for a variety of purposes, using a variety of forms. He needs an environment where he can experiment, take risks, and receive instant feedback, for we learn to write in much the same way as we learn to talk, by interrelating with other people.

Putting ideas on paper can be very difficult because the words reveal the self. Pupils who struggle to express themselves in writing, especially if they have been denied guidance in the formulation stages of their work, feel especially vulnerable to criticism.

But when young people realize that they are learning to shape language much as a sculptor works and builds with

clay, and when they learn to regard the teacher as someone genuinely interested in what they are creating, they grow to accept criticism as valuable and vital to improvement. The fear gradually disappears.

> Composing involves exploring and mulling over a subject, planning the particular piece; getting started; making discoveries about feelings, values or ideas, even while in the process of writing a draft; making continuous decisions about diction, syntax, and rhetoric in relation to the intended meaning and to meaning taking shape; reviewing what has accumulated, and anticipating and rehearsing what comes next; tinkering and reformulating; stopping; contemplating the finished piece and, perhaps finally, revising. This complex, unpredictable, demanding activity is what we call the writing process.[15]

Learning to work through the process requires time and patience. By the time the student reaches secondary school he should have a mental picture of the process as well as an understanding of what is required at each of the stages.

If writing is to develop in his classroom, the teacher must be involved in assessment and evaluation continuously: in diagnosing both class and individual weaknesses before beginning a programme, during the formulation of an assignment, and when a product is submitted for marking. Obviously, these are onerous tasks when there are thirty or thirty-five youngsters in each class. But since quality, not quantity is the goal, the time invested will pay dividends.

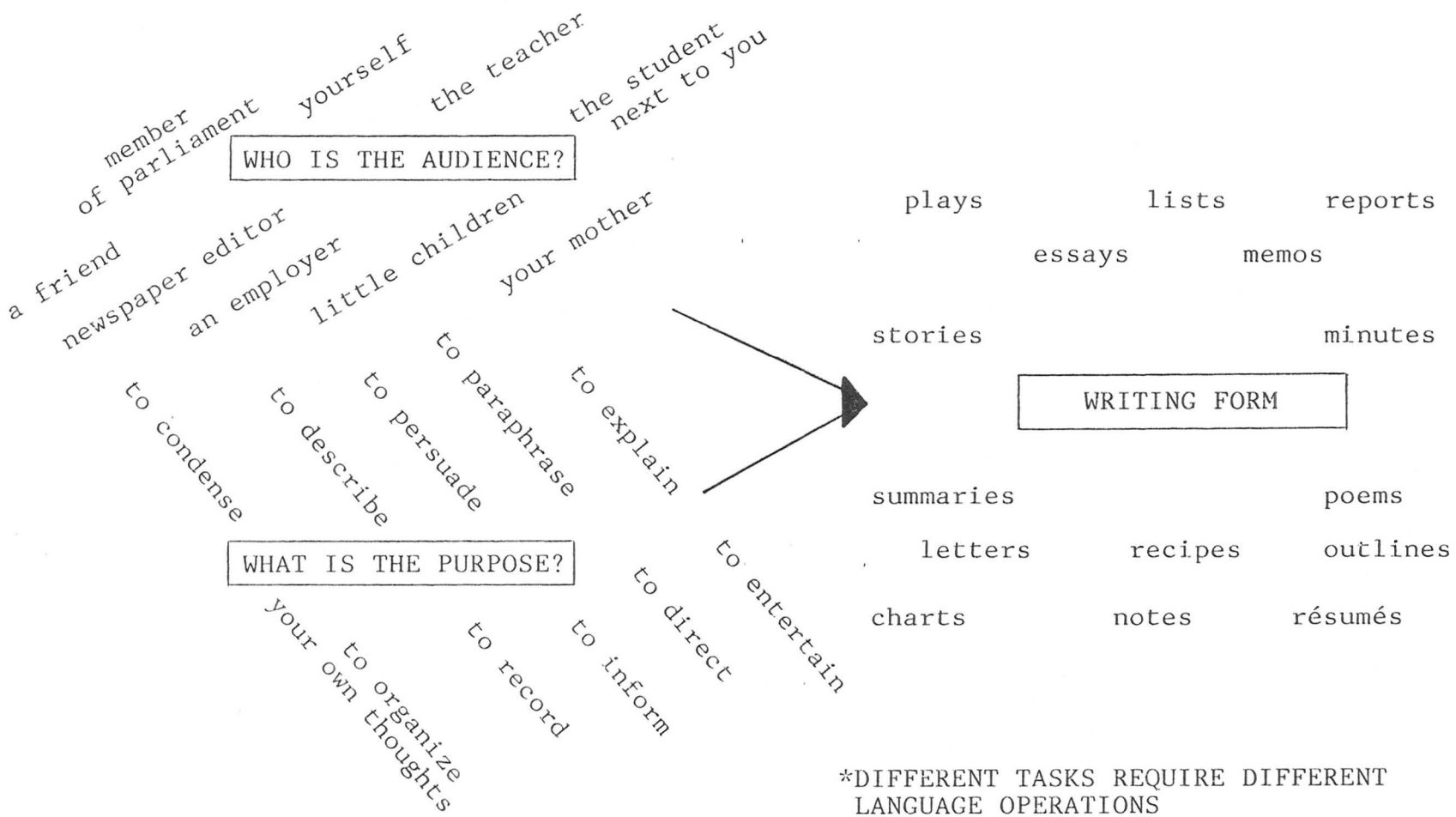
It seems to me to be far better for a student to learn how to write one story or one essay, step by step, with immediate oral and written feedback, than to receive three or four assignments, days, or even weeks after they have been

submitted with nothing more than impersonal comments indicating what is wrong, and with little help for remedying the problem.

The unit that follows attempts to develop many of the ideas expressed in this Preamble. Students write for a purpose, to entertain; for a particular audience, children; and in a particular genre, the picturebook. They read a large number of children's books, talk with one another about what they have read, and listen to children as they respond to what they read.

The unit will require refinement as teachers work with it and point out its strengths and weaknesses, make suggestions for its improvement, and add their own ideas as they tailor it to particular classes of students.

BEFORE STUDENTS WRITE, THEY NEED TO KNOW THE ANSWERS TO TWO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS DIAGRAMMED BELOW. THE ANSWERS WILL DETERMINE THE FORM THE WRITING WILL TAKE.



*DIFFERENT TASKS REQUIRE DIFFERENT LANGUAGE OPERATIONS

"STAGES IN LEARNING TO WRITE"

1. PREWRITING

Generating and Gathering Ideas

- discussing
- observing
- imagining
- experiencing from:
  - movies
  - music
  - television
  - travel
  - reading
    - books
    - newspapers
    - magazines
  - hobbies
  - activities
    - play
    - work

Determining

(1) Purpose

- to inform
- to instruct
- to persuade
- to entertain

(2) Audience

- personal
- peer group
- general
- specific person(s)

Choosing a Form

- story
- poem
- play
- picturebook
- anecdote
- report
- résumé
- critique
- essay
- diary
- journal
- article
- letter
- editorial

Selecting Ideas

- relevant to topic and form
- determining important ideas/details

Planning and Organizing

- lists
- notes
- diagrams
- outlines
- ordering ideas
- blocking out paragraphs

2. WRITING

Drafting

- phrases
- sentences
- paragraphs

Revising

- adding
- deleting
- substituting
- re-wording
- rearranging

all operate at the following levels: single word/phrase/sentence/paragraph

- avoiding repetition
- combining sentences
- varying sentence length and kind
- varying loose, balanced and periodic sentences
- re-ordering ideas

Proofreading

- spelling
- grammar and usage
- sentence structure
- punctuation
- capitalization
- acceptable handwriting/typing

3. POSTWRITING

Sharing and Appreciating

- reading aloud/tape record
- publication in school newspaper or magazine
- bulletin board display
- publication of a book or booklet
- dramatizing
- writing for private enjoyment

UNIT RATIONALE

The lessons have been constructed to provide what I believe to be an interesting and productive method for both the critical analysis of a particular literary genre, and the development of a piece of written work in the same genre. My choice is children's picturebooks, a fascinating and rich area of literature that generally receives very little attention beyond the primary grades of elementary school.

By including this unit in the syllabus for the grade eleven year, the teacher introduces his students to a genre that they might otherwise never encounter as an object of study.

Since this unit is designed for a period of six weeks, it cannot address all of the aspects of language development that need classroom attention during the secondary school years; however, it is designed to put into practice many of the ideas and attitudes expressed about language in the Preamble. Precisely what those attitudes and ideas are and how they are to be realized need explanation.

The activities of the unit involve the students in a language exchange that emphasizes all four language arts: listening, reading, speaking and writing. As the primary children talk about their picturebooks, the grade eleven student must record what he hears and he must organize and summarize the information as well as analyze children's responses. He learns to listen to children in a courteous, considerate and attentive manner as expressions, thoughts and

ideas about their books will tumble from their lips. As he listens, the student formulates his next question so that the conversation with the youngsters flows easily and smoothly. When he reacts spontaneously and enthusiastically to what the children have to report, he learns a great deal about their interests and their attitudes toward books.

The unit provides for class discussion following the reading and study of picturebooks. Through this exchange, students listen to gain knowledge and information; they learn to appreciate different points of view and to evaluate the relative merits of these views. Thus throughout the lessons in the unit, students are not only learning to listen but also listening in order to learn from one another.

In addition to developing listening skills, students begin to understand more about the process of reading. They must sort out and organize their thoughts and ideas about what they read before they can respond critically in discussion with other classmates. They have the opportunity to realize that reading is not a subject in the curriculum but a process by which the reader involves himself in a subject. The teacher is guided in the unit to ask questions and direct students' attention to three levels of reading.

Reading for literal comprehension requires the understanding of what is explicitly portrayed. Questions that require only literal reading begin with "who", "what", "when" or "where". They deal with details and with the sequence of events.

Reading for interpretive comprehension, the second level, requires student understanding of what is implied or is easily deduced from explicit facts and details. Questions and discussion centre around inferences, conclusions, generalizations, comparisons and contrasts, assumptions, the main idea, relationship of details, anticipation of events and prediction of outcomes. Such questions generally begin with "how" or "why".

Critical reading, the third level, involves the reader's evaluations and judgments based on his knowledge and experience. Reasonableness rather than certainty applies. In this unit students have the opportunity to apply critical skills to children's literature. They examine the author's purpose, his skill in developing the plot, in creating atmosphere, in establishing a particular point of view and setting, and in choosing appropriate diction and figurative language. Having been introduced to qualities to look for in a good book, the students make critical decisions about whether or not a particular book is worth giving to children to read. At this point in the unit grade eleven students should begin to realize that critical reading requires concentration, as well as reflective and analytical thought.

Speaking skills are developed informally in small group discussion as students share their personal reactions and judgments about the picturebooks they read. The discussion groups are structured in the unit so that no time is wasted by talk that has little direction. The small group discussions

among students are well-organized and task-oriented.

More formally, students offer their assessment of particular books in front of the whole class. This requires speaking ease and poise that result from practice and from sharing responses with classmates in an atmosphere of mutual trust and co-operation. Students learn to pronounce and enunciate well, selecting the appropriate tone, pitch, volume and tempo required by the text. Above all they learn to speak naturally and sincerely, developing an easy flow of language. Later in the unit, when they read their own picturebooks aloud to children, they will need these oral reading skills.

Student writing in the unit requires both transactional writing in the completion of a picturebook critique, and poetic writing in the creation of a picturebook. Since students ordinarily spend a great deal of time copying from the chalkboard and/or answering teacher-prepared questions, the writing in this unit emphasizes student-generated ideas that require working out through the writing process.

The writing process is taught in Part B of the unit as students learn that writing requires a great deal of hard work. They learn to gather ideas, organize these ideas, write a first draft, revise, re-write, proofread, and finally share the final product which must communicate in correct English. During this process the teacher is present to assist the writing development. He becomes "teacher-as-examiner" only when the student is prepared to submit work for formal evaluation. Through peer, self and teacher evaluation,

students learn to accept criticism more easily and to offer it constructively to others. When they write in Part B of this unit they are writing for a purpose, to entertain; for an audience, young children; and in a definite form, the picturebook. They not only learn to write, but they also learn through writing as they sort out ideas, select, discard, re-arrange and re-word thoughts and ideas. As a final step, they pay close attention to spelling, sentence structure, grammar and punctuation since writing must be a code that both the writer and reader share in common so that communication can take place.

In more general terms, Part A of the unit provides for the reading and study of several children's picturebooks. It offers an analytical and critical approach to what secondary school students read; but, at the same time, it offers the appreciation of a literary genre designed for another age group. Picturebooks provide variety in curriculum focus and are a relatively uncomplicated, yet mature form for investigation and criticism. From their study of picturebooks students organize a critique both in oral and in written form. They consider several concepts as well: picturebooks are a specific and distinct genre; they provide a source for critical examination; they reflect customs, attitudes, biases and values; their appreciation is personal; and finally, children's books both teach and entertain.

In Part B the designing and writing of a picturebook provide opportunities for students to: develop creativity

and ingenuity through a personal writing activity; demonstrate their degree of mastery of basic composition skills; exercise the imagination; practise the mechanics of the writing process described in the Preamble; participate in peer assessment and self-assessment; study the rudiments of good writing through a productive and purposeful activity; and receive instant and continuous feedback as writing progresses.

Most importantly however, in Part B, students learn that personal satisfaction can be gained through producing something, not only for oneself, but also for others.

The twenty-eight lessons of the unit integrate language and literature studies in a systematic and organized manner. At the same time, the unit allows students to approach the skills of critical appraisal and evaluation in a non-threatening way, so that if they have difficulty assessing more "mature" literature, they can apply what they learn through picturebooks to future and more difficult reading.

And finally, the unit provides a focus for liaison between the elementary feeder schools and the secondary schools in a family. After all, the youngsters are moving from one school to another in a particular area and should experience continuity in programme. The elementary teachers should be knowledgeable about the course of English studies in the secondary school, and the secondary school teachers should become aware of the learning activities that take place in the primary/junior grades.

UNIT CONSTRUCTION

The unit is designed for approximately six weeks or twenty-eight class periods for grade eleven students. Courses of study in English generally require students, in the third year of secondary school in Ontario, to study composition and grammar as well as literature during the school year. Poems, plays, short stories, essays and novels comprise the literature study; one or two page compositions, book reviews and critiques, short essays, grammar exercises and, in some classrooms, creative writing constitute the language study.

Teachers look constantly for new approaches to their material that will motivate students to enjoy all aspects of English study.

During the first eight lessons of the unit, students read at least thirty-five picturebooks, discuss how they are like other fiction they have read, and how they differ. They learn to read at the literal, interpretive and critical levels in making judgments about individual books.

As the lessons progress and students discuss the relative merits of what they read with classmates and with the teacher, they gradually construct a list of criteria as a guide to critical assessment. During the discussions they learn to listen to the points of view of other persons and they contribute their own ideas to the exchange. The culminating activity of this part of the unit is a critique of a picturebook which is to be submitted to the teacher for grading.

The following twenty lessons involve the students in writing a picturebook of their own. Before beginning, they make two or three visits to primary classrooms (grades one to three) in their "feeder" schools, go to the school library with the children, note the titles of books that the youngsters choose from the shelves, talk with the children about the books they like and the reasons why they choose to read them. During these visits the students make notes about what they observe and what they learn about children and their books. Suggestions included in the unit provide a guide for these observations.

When the students are ready to write their own books they are helped by the teacher in whole class lessons, by working in small groups with other students, and by receiving individual attention when and where it is warranted.

Composition, grammar, organizational and stylistic skills comprise the classroom teaching for this part of the unit. Close attention is paid to the mechanics of written English so that the product is ready for others to read. When the picturebooks are completed they are submitted to the teacher for evaluation. But, before the students return with their books to the elementary schools for presentation to the children, time will need to be spent practising oral reading. Unlike silent reading, reading aloud requires the use of the voice to interpret the text for the listener. Learning to modulate the voice, to choose the proper pitch, tone, volume, and speed, and to use the voice for dramatizing, are all part

of reading aloud so that others enjoy listening.

Many of the completed picturebooks should be catalogued and left on the library shelves in the elementary schools for circulation so that other children can enjoy them as well.

NOTES

1. Ministry of Education, Ontario, Language Across the Curriculum (Toronto, 1977), p. 3.

2. George Mead, quoted in D. Barnes et al., eds., Language, the Learner and the School (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1971), p. 126.

3. Sir Allan Bullock et al., A Language For Life: The Bullock Report (London, 1975), IV, section 12.5.

4. Frank McTeague et al., An Investigation of Secondary School Student Writing Across the Curriculum (Toronto, 1980), p. 10.

5. Research was begun in England during the late 1960's and early 1970's by language scholars working at the University of London, Department of Education. James Britton, Nancy Martin, Peter Medway, Anthony Burgess, Michael Torbe and others in the team worked with Schools Councils across Great Britain exploring the nature of language generation and acquisition in children. Their research contributed significantly to the publication entitled, A Language for Life, better known as the Bullock Report which was published in 1975. The report examines the important role of oral language in student ability to both read and write. It argues for the teaching of writing by advocating teacher emphasis on the process of writing as opposed to the finished product. The document has four major sections. Among classroom teachers of English in Britain, Australia, Canada and the United States, it is considered the most important statement about language learning to date.

6. In 1967 the Plowden Report in Britain printed by Her Majesty's Stationery Office was issued about the same time as the Hall-Dennis Report in Ontario. Both advocated a "child-centred" curriculum that championed the relaxation of structure of programmes of study and encouraged what was termed "freedom" for children to pursue "their own interests". In Ontario the Hall-Dennis Report was superseded by a return to specified curriculum with the advent of The Formative Years for the primary/junior school in 1975 and the intermediate and senior documents in 1977.

7. Ibid.

8. Glenn Matott, "In Search of a Philosophical Context for Teaching Composition", in College Composition, XXVII (1976), p. 28.

9. Ibid., p. 26.

10. See page 37 following the Preamble in this unit for "Research Bibliography" listing the current important research papers in language learning.

11. Ibid.

12. James Moffet, Teaching the Universe of Discourse (New York, 1968), pp. 188-210.

13. James Britton, Language and Learning (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1970), pp. 173-180.

14. Frank McTeague et al., op. cit., p. 10.

15. Charles Cooper and Lee Odell, Evaluating Writing: Describing, Measuring, Judging (Urbana, Illinois), p. xi.

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PART A

Unit Overview

Lessons - Part A

Teacher's Guide

OVERVIEW OF THE LESSONS PART A

USING CHILDREN'S PICTUREBOOKS AS A SOURCE FOR CRITICAL ANALYSIS IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL - GRADE 11

Aims and Objectives	Concept and Skill Development	Teaching Strategies	Resources	Student Assessment	Time-Line
GENERAL -To develop in students: (1) an analytical and critical approach to what they read (2) an appreciation of a genre designed for another age group -To provide variety in curriculum focus -To encourage students to take the initiative in their own learning -To promote in students a discussion-based approach to evaluation of a genre. SPECIFIC -To provide a situation where students evaluate and note specific aspects of children's picturebooks with two main guiding principles in mind:	Concepts -Recognize picturebooks as a specific and distinct genre -Picturebooks provide a source for critical examination -Children's books reflect customs, attitudes, biases, values -Appreciation of literature is personal -Children's picturebooks both teach and entertain. Skill Development READING -Developing depth in students i.e. literal reading (reading the lines) interpretive reading (reading between the lines) critical reading (reading beyond the lines)	Whole Class - cooperative assessment of books read (cooperative BB outline) Whole Class - a consideration of IRA SLEEPS OVER- from screen (teacher directed) - students add to their notes already tabulated on teacher-prepared outline Small Group - a discussion by students (in groups) of books they specifically chose to read Individual - student volunteers make oral presentation to whole class on their critical evaluation of a book of their choice Individual - teacher circulates in the room as students work independently and in groups during the week (NB to talk with each student	-a large number of children's picturebooks (student selected general reading from among available collection of picturebooks in the classroom) -two or three specific books chosen by each student for analysis IRA SLEEPS OVER (picture book) -Cooperative assessment; students and teacher -use 35 mm. coloured slides of this commercially produced picturebook -Teacher prepared outline for individual student assignment:	INFORMAL Teacher Observations (for his/her information in planning teaching strategies) -ability of students to work in groups and to work independently -the attention span of each student -student initiative in directing his/her own learning FORMAL 1. Written Critique for IRA SLEEPS OVER assessed out of 50 marks 25 marks for content 10 marks for mechanics (spelling, sentence structure) 15 marks for style (diction/sentence	8 40 minute classroom periods

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OVERVIEW OF THE LESSONS PART A (continued) .....

Aims and Objectives	Concept and Skill Development	Teaching Strategies	Resources	Student Assessment	Time-Line
(a) features common to good fiction; (b) features specific to children's picturebooks. -To organize and present a critique in both oral and written form	WRITING -Providing practice for students in writing a critical analysis using a picturebook as source LISTENING -Learning to listen to views of other students through discussion-based exchange -listen to summarize SPEAKING -Developing oral speaking skills in 3-5 minute oral presentation -Group discussion techniques	in the class about what he/she is doing) * Teacher encourages as much student-directed learning as possible	Choose one book from the classroom collection which you have not read. Write a critique of not more than two handwritten pages in length considering the most important aspects of the book. Resource Book Scharback, Alexander. Critical Reading and Writing. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965.	variety in kind and length/unity and coherence of thought) (Students aware of marking scheme before assignment undertaken)	

PART A - 8 LESSONS

LESSON #1 TIME - 40 MINUTES

GENERAL OBJECTIVES	CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT	TEACHING STRATEGIES
• Students will approach the appreciation of children's picturebooks through general class discussion. Note: Students come to class at the beginning of the unit, each having read at least 35 picture-books, and prepared to focus on the study of this genre. (Suggested titles for picturebook reading are included in Appendix 1 beginning on page 93.) SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES • Students will formulate and share personal reactions to the reading of literature for young children. RESOURCES • Chart Paper • Magic Markers	1. Picturebooks constitute a particular genre based on criteria that they share in common. SKILL DEVELOPMENT WRITING - Reducing to point form, particular aspects of the picture-books read. READING - Appreciation of a specific genre - Children's Picture-books (a) Literal Reading (b) Interpretive Reading (c) Critical Reading LISTENING AND SPEAKING - Learning to listen and respond to viewpoints of other students during the discussion of books read. - Listening to summarize and tabulate in point form. - Speaking for three purposes: to assert; to inquire; to explore.	INTRODUCTION 1. Introduce students to their reading of the books with three reading levels in mind: (a) literal level - "reading the lines" (b) interpretive level - "reading between the lines" (c) critical level - "reading beyond the lines" (See Teacher's Guide, pp. 56-57 for description of the three levels.) 2. Students work in groups of 3 "brainstorming" ideas about significant features of the picturebooks. Note: Students jot down all of the suggestions made by members of the group without critical assessment at this point. DEVELOPMENT 1. Groups of 3 pupils join to form groups of 6. Using the list of each of the previous groups of three, the new group accepts and discards particular suggestions until one list of 10-12 features of picturebooks is arrived at. 2. Each group of 6 records its list in magic marker on chart paper for display and general discussion in lesson 2. HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT Each student prepares a 1 - 1½ page rationale for the list arrived at in his/her group.

LESSON #2 TIME - 40 MINUTES

GENERAL OBJECTIVES	CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT	TEACHING STRATEGIES
• Students will develop an analytical approach to the literature that they read. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES • Students in concert with the teacher establish that: (a) picturebooks have criteria found in other literature; (b) criteria of special import pertain to particular picture-books. RESOURCES • Masking Tape • Overhead Projector and Markers/ • Transparencies	1. Understanding that literature has great variety 2. Recognizing the picturebook as a source for critical assessment SKILL DEVELOPMENT WRITING - Selecting and recording particular criteria of picturebooks	INTRODUCTION 1. Each group of 6 students displays its list of picturebook criteria. (Use masking tape to secure chart paper to the chalkboard.) 2. One student from each group reads aloud his/her rationale prepared for today's lesson. (Spend approximately 20 minutes on this part of the lesson.) 3. All students submit rationale for marking by the teacher. DEVELOPMENT 4. Whole class discussion follows - conducted by the teacher: (a) criteria common to all 6 groups of students are recorded on the overhead transparency as they are established during the discussion. (b) criteria that picturebooks share with other literature are underlined on the transparency; (c) remaining criteria, which are peculiar to the picturebook, are noted as well. Note: Information on the transparency should be typed by school office personnel and distributed to students for their notebooks. HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT Each student chooses two picturebooks that he/she has not read and prepares a list of criteria particular to each book. Students submit assignment to the teacher for assessment.

LESSON #3 TIME - 40 MINUTES

GENERAL OBJECTIVES	CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT	TEACHING STRATEGIES
• Students will develop a critical approach to their reading of children's picturebooks. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES • Students will learn to classify using broad categories that include all the picturebooks available to the class. RESOURCES • 35-50 Picturebooks • Display area	1. Recognizing the variety of types of children's picturebooks 2. Recognizing what "classifying" entails 3. Picturebooks can be classified according to type. SKILL DEVELOPMENT READING - Learning to classify picturebooks into types and varieties.	INTRODUCTION 1. Teacher begins the lesson by placing 35-50 picturebooks on a large table or along chalkboard ledge for easy access. DEVELOPMENT 2. Teacher, through questioning and explanation, determines that students understand the concept, "classifying". 3. Students and teacher, working in groups, examine and classify all of the books according to types, designing categories as the activity progresses. (See Teacher's Guide, page 62, for ideas and suggestions for this lesson.)

LESSON #4 TIME - 40 MINUTES

GENERAL OBJECTIVES	CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT	TEACHING STRATEGIES
• Students will continue to mature in responding to what they read. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES • Students will prepare headings that they will use as a guide to writing a picture-book critique. • Students will write a 2-page critique on a selected book.	1. The appreciation of literature is personal. 2. Children's picturebooks both teach and entertain. SKILL DEVELOPMENT WRITING - Developing headings to use as a guide in writing a critique.	INTRODUCTION Review list of criteria prepared and distributed to students following lesson #2. DEVELOPMENT 1. From the list of criteria prepared in lesson #2, students and teacher will select aspects of picturebooks that will serve as headings for the writing of a critique. Now compare composite class list with prepared pages distributed by the teacher at this point in the lesson. Discuss any additional aspects included on the pages. See pages 66-73 for prepared pages. 2. Review with the class the method for writing a critique. HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT "Using the headings developed in today's lesson, write a 2-page critique on a selected picturebook. Make sure that you have not considered the book up to this point in your study. Be prepared to present your critique orally for next class."

LESSON #5 TIME - 40 MINUTES

GENERAL OBJECTIVES	CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT	TEACHING STRATEGIES
• Students will have variety in presentation of ideas: the oral mode will be stressed in this lesson. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES • Students will be encouraged to share their ideas readily with their peers. RESOURCES • Cassette tape recorder and recording cassettes	1. We communicate with each other by speaking and listening, as well as by reading and writing. 2. The communication of ideas through the oral mode requires proper enunciation, pronunciation, voice speed, loudness, and intonation. SKILL DEVELOPMENT LISTENING and SPEAKING - Students must concentrate on listening and making judgments, based on remembering not only what was said, but how it was constructed. Students who present their critique must concentrate on good oral communication.	Note: Entire 40 minute period is spent in listening to oral presentations of student critiques. Students volunteer to make 4-5 minute presentations. Members of the class are invited to respond briefly to each critique, offering constructive criticism where applicable. Note: Weak students benefit from being able to hear how others approached the assignment. The teacher comments on, and underscores, the proper construction of a critical evaluation. Students who offer oral presentations may have them recorded as they speak so that they may privately assess their efforts at a later time. Have cassette tapes available.

LESSON #6 TIME - 40 MINUTES

GENERAL OBJECTIVES	CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT	TEACHING STRATEGIES
• Students will demonstrate that they can both analyze and draw conclusions about a literary genre designed for another age group. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES Students criticize a specific book in (a) a whole group situation; (b) a small group situation. RESOURCES •Carousel slide projector •Screen •35 mm slides - each page of the book •Paperback copies of Ira Sleeps Over	1. Understanding that criticism requires a detailed appraisal. SKILL DEVELOPMENT LISTENING and SPEAKING (a) Learning to listen while others speak in small group discussion in order to respond. (b) Learning to be concise and precise in speaking one's views to others in the group.	INTRODUCTION Teacher reads aloud to the class IRA SLEEPS OVER, a picturebook written by Bernard Waber. DEVELOPMENT Using the knowledge acquired so far about approaching the criticism of a picturebook, teacher leads general class discussion of the book following the reading. Next, students view a series of 35 mm slides made from each page of the book in preparation for a more detailed assessment of the book. Students now meet in groups of 3 or 4 to criticize aspects of the book in detail. (Individual paperback copies of the book may be purchased.) HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT Students begin to write a critique for Ira Sleeps Over. The assignment should be 3-5 handwritten pages in length. Bring work to next class.

LESSON #7 TIME - 40 MINUTES

GENERAL OBJECTIVES	CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT	TEACHING STRATEGIES
• Students will begin to demonstrate considerable accomplishment in making critical statements. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES • Students individually write a critique evaluating a specific picturebook. RESOURCES Teacher is main resource person during this class period.	1. The written critique is a personal assessment of the overall quality of the picturebook. 2. A critique is a precise and concise evaluation of a book. SKILL DEVELOPMENT WRITING - Pupils must plan, select, and organize their ideas to write a 3-5 page critique.	DEVELOPMENT This lesson is a "working" period. The teacher acts as a resource person as students use this time to continue writing their critiques for Ira Sleeps Over (begun as homework from the previous lesson). This working period is important for helping students as they formulate their ideas and begin to put them on paper. The teacher is the resource person. HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT Students complete the critique for homework in preparation for the next lesson.

LESSON #8 TIME - 40 MINUTES

GENERAL OBJECTIVES	CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT	TEACHING STRATEGIES
• Students will demonstrate skill in making critical comment. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES • Students will have practice in helping their peers by offering constructive criticism. RESOURCES Desks/chairs arranged so that students can work together. Students act as resource persons for each other.	1. Writing involves more than one draft. The writer must revise until satisfied with his/her effort. SKILL DEVELOPMENT WRITING - Pupils will learn to proofread, make constructive comments to peers, and revise their work.	DEVELOPMENT Students work this period in pairs, considering their critiques written last day and for homework: (a) each student reads his/her aloud to partner; (b) pupils in each pair act as critics for each other - proofreading, appraising, and noting areas for revising before assignments are submitted to the teacher for evaluation. HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT "Complete the re-writing of your critique. Submit the assignment within 3 days for teacher evaluation." EVALUATION: 25 marks - content 15 marks - style 10 marks - mechanics TOTAL: 50 marks

TEACHER'S GUIDE

General Introduction

The ideas and information presented in this part of the unit are designed to help you work through the lessons of both PART A and PART B. You will find that your students will question you about the reason for their being asked to consider picturebooks as part of their study. The "Unit Rationale" that accompanies the lessons gives the teacher a detailed outline of the learning that is possible for the unit; however, a simple explanation that children's picturebooks are an interesting and novel approach to developing student critical and analytical skills, and a challenging writing assignment for the English programme, should suffice at the beginning. As the students continue to read books and begin to create their own, it is to be hoped that they will realize the knowledge and skill that are needed to make critical comment and to produce a book for someone else to read.

This unit will require your working closely with the elementary school teachers of the primary classes that your students will visit. You will need to gain their interest and support in setting up the project and arranging a time schedule for both "pre" and "post" unit visitations. Explain the objectives of the unit indicating the benefit, not only to the grade eleven students, but also to the young children as well who will enjoy meeting with older students and having books read aloud.

The "pre" unit visits will allow the students to talk

with the children, and to spend time in the school library with them discovering what books they choose to read. Encourage each grade eleven class to talk with the youngsters to learn: information about the kind of books they read; the reasons they offer for their selection as well as their reactions to what they read. At least two or three visits should be made prior to beginning the unit so that students have adequate time to observe children enjoying their books and so that the children become accustomed to their visitors.

Provide your classes with access to a large number of picturebooks at least three weeks prior to beginning the unit so that they may read as many different kinds as possible. A picturebook "centre" set up at the back of your classroom on tables or portable shelves is one suggestion for easy access. It is important also that the teacher read all of the books that are available to the students.

FOR THE STUDENT

Observation Record

The primary division of elementary school includes all the children from kindergarten to the end of grade three with, usually, one grade per classroom. You will visit at least one classroom of primary children where you will have the opportunity to talk with the students, find out what picturebooks they choose to read, and the reasons for their selection. Make sure that you visit the school library with the children so that you can see the books that are on the shelves and

observe the youngsters as they read.

As you are learning about what children select, you will want to pay special attention to specific aspects of children and their picturebooks.

The physical size of the books they choose will vary greatly. The Beatrix Potter books are only twelve by fifteen centimetres; whereas, many others may be as large as forty by thirty centimetres. You will find that little children are fascinated by both very small and very large books and that by manipulating the pages, they are both enjoying the story and developing and refining the use of the muscles of the arms and fingers. They love to touch the pages, often tracing around the figure of a character with their fingers as they read, as though to do so were to make him come alive. Some of their books will have text as well as pictures or illustrations; others will have pictures or illustrations only. These may be sketches, cartoons, caricatures or even photographs and they may be realistic or fanciful. You will find that there is a great deal of variety.

You will want to notice whether or not the book uses colour to advantage. Perhaps the book is not very satisfactory because it is dull, lifeless and uninviting to a child. On the other hand, there are books with very few pictures that children want to read repeatedly. Through your observations, try to discover the titles of some of these books and ask the children why it is that they read them over and over again.

The characters in picturebooks may be animals, people,

puppets or imaginary creatures that do not fit into any specific category. As a result, some stories are true to life while others are highly imaginative. Notice the settings of the stories. Are they urban or rural? Canadian or foreign? set in today's world, the world of yesterday, or the world of the future? or are they set in a "magic" land of the imagination?

Is the size of print a help or hindrance to the child as he reads? Since the eye muscles of some children develop more slowly than those of others, large print often allows for easier reading. The eye is less likely to skip a line or two of large print. As the child reads more and more, the eye muscle movement becomes more precise, allowing him to focus on smaller print. Generally speaking, most elementary school children will choose books with which they can physically cope.

Many of the best loved picturebooks teach a lesson. Sometimes the lesson is very obvious; sometimes it is more subtle. Notice this aspect of the picturebooks that the children with whom you visit choose to read.

When you talk with each student you might want to include among your questions some of the following: Why did you choose this book? Have you read it before? If so, why did you decide to read it again? Do you like animals or human characters better? Why? Do you like stories with both? Why or why not? If you could change anything you wish about the book, what would you choose?

Have each child, with whom you talk, read his book aloud to you. Note the words and phrases that he emphasizes and the parts of the book he comments on without your questioning him. Now have him put the book aside and tell the story to you in his own words. You will know whether or not he has understood what he has read. Pay attention to the details he remembers. Which exact words or phrases does he include in his own version? What part of the story does he seem to recall best? Ask him to describe the pictures in the book. All of these activities with you allow the child to manipulate language by listening, speaking and reading.

You will find your visit to the elementary school fascinating and you will learn a great deal that is new to you about the genre that you enjoyed as a child.

WHAT KIND OF BOOKS SHOULD WE PROVIDE FOR CHILDREN?

We should not make the mistake of expecting that children, in general, will favour particular kinds of stories or particular kinds of illustrations. Like adults, their likes and dislikes will offer very little in the way of uniformity or pattern.

With this in mind the teacher must ask himself: "Which picturebooks from among hundreds on the market do I buy for my children?"

Among a collection of good books for children will be fables, folktales, fairy stories, realistic adventures, dreams, stories in pictures without text, animal fantasies,

stories in verse, myths, legends, picture song books and science fiction stories which are generally humorous for young children!

Good books are illustrated in a number of ways. The artist may depict the characters and story in cartoons, caricatures, realistic sketches, engravings, line drawings, photographs, abstract designs or collage; choosing media that include woodcut and linoleum block, oils, acrylics, water colours and plasticene.

Parents and teachers need to provide a constant source of new reading material from which children can choose, books that please them but which also engage their intellect. Obviously these include books that stimulate the imagination and may be ones that are familiar to them because children never tire of reading and re-reading their favourites. Little children identify with books much as they do with toys; both provide security since children know them and feel comfortable with them as they do with a parent or grandparent.

At the same time, we must have books that challenge young readers, that allow them to fit the "new" into the experience with life that they already possess. Edward W. Rosenheim Jr., in an article entitled "Children's Reading and Adults' Values" included in Only Connect: Readings On Children's Literature, asks important questions for teachers to consider when they purchase picturebooks for their children:

> ...I would suggest that, if my concept of the most satisfying reading is a correct one, we do not bother inordinately with

> questions such as, "Is this a great book?" Or a wholesome one. Or an up-to-date one. Or an informative one. Or even a "broadening" one. The questions I would ask would tend to be: Will this book call into play my child's imagination? Will it invite the exercise of genuine compassion or humour or even irony? Will it exploit his capacity for being curious? Will its language challenge his awareness of rhythms and structures? Will its characters and events call for - and even strengthen - his understanding of human motives and circumstances, of causes and effects? And will it provide him with a joy that is in some part the joy of achievement, of understanding, of triumphant encounter with the new?" (p. 42)

Bruno Bettelheim in The Uses of Enchantment makes a strong plea for literature that holds the child's attention and that arouses his curiosity:

> But to enrich his life, it must stimulate his imagination; help him develop his intellect and to clarify his emotions; be attuned to his anxieties and aspirations; give full recognition to his difficulties, while at the same time suggesting solutions to the problems which perturb him. In short, it must at one and the same time relate to all aspects of his personality - and this without ever belittling but, on the contrary, giving full credence to the seriousness of the child's predicaments, while simultaneously promoting confidence in himself and in his future. (p. 5)

TEACHER'S GUIDE

PART A - Using Children's Picturebooks as a Source for Critical Analysis in the Secondary School - Grade 11

Introduce the unit to your students:

Begin by explaining to the students the composition of the unit, its duration, the rationale for choosing children's picturebooks as a vehicle for criticism and composition, and what will be required as assignments for approximately six weeks' work.

Prior to this first lesson have picturebooks available for your students so that they may read at least thirty-five different samples. It is important to the methodology of the unit that the students first approach the genre without having discussed it with the teacher or without having read articles about children's picturebooks. This will keep preconceived notions to a minimum. From listening to group and class discussions as PART A of the unit progresses, the teacher learns what is most immediate about the books to grade eleven readers. What is significant about the discussion that follows is that it originates from student interest and ingenuity and not from teacher-directed inquiry.

Before you begin lesson one of the unit, make arrangements for your grade eleven classes to visit the primary division of a feeder school. Here your students will have an opportunity to talk with the children about the books they read and to observe children selecting and responding to

literature. Note that included at the beginning of the Teacher's Guide are suggestions for the student to help him prepare for his visit.

LESSON 1

Students begin, in groups of three, to discuss what they have learned to date about children's picturebooks. At this point their knowledge comes from their own reading plus their visit with the elementary school children. As the teacher, you facilitate learning by listening and observing as ideas and judgments are considered and by noting aspects of criticism approached and those overlooked. Note also where misunderstanding occurs so that you can offer additional information or interpretation as your contribution to the study.

As a second step, combine the small groups into larger groups of six. Try to ensure that all students participate within their group by having one student act as a leader for the other five students. His/her role is to include everyone in the "brainstorming" session. Spend about ten minutes at the end of the lesson teaching your students the significance of the three levels of reading comprehension.

The literal level of reading can be termed, "reading the lines". Literal comprehension is concerned with the understanding of explicitly stated details. Questions operating at this level begin with the words: "who", "what", "when", "where", and "how many".

Interpretive comprehension involves reasoning from

explicit facts and details that occur in the material. "How" and "why" questions result in interpretive thought and require that the reader "read between the lines".

"Reading beyond the lines" requires critical reading or reading concerned with evaluation or judgment based on previous knowledge and experience. Questions require the reader to come to a conclusion through the process of reasoning.

The three levels occur nearly simultaneously for the good reader. For the inexperienced reader, or one who has problems with comprehension, this may not happen. Obviously the literal understanding of the words in context must be accommodated before the student can understand the relationship among ideas or pass judgment on them.

Make your students aware, during the discussion in small groups, that they are using language to make inquiries of one another, to explore their own and other persons' ideas, as well as to assert their own points of view. These activities require learning how to listen as well as how to respond.

* At the end of the lesson students should begin to appreciate picturebooks as a particular literary genre with identifiable criteria shared in common.

Assign homework as indicated in Lesson #1.

LESSON 2

Begin by having one student from each of the groups of six students report to the class on the list of picturebook criteria tabulated on chart paper. As each group finishes

have the sheet of chart paper displayed at the front of the classroom.

Have one student from each group read his/her rationale for the list arrived at in the group. At this point in the lesson the teacher records, on an overhead transparency, criteria that are common to most or all of the groups. In addition, include important criteria noted on individual charts that the students, during discussion at this point in the lesson, accept as important.

The next step is to distinguish among the criteria to determine which are common to fiction in general, and which are identified more readily with the picturebook. This can be done through general class discussion and consent. Underline, on the transparency, characteristics shared by all fiction and put a check mark beside those aspects especially related to the picturebook.

Students in grade eleven can be expected to include most of the following criteria for good fiction: a pattern of development that includes an introduction, inciting force, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution; unity of time, place and action; coherence of thought; appropriateness of form, organization and language to the content; consistent characterization; use of particular literary devices and figures of speech for purposes of effect. These terms have been encountered in the study of short stories and novels during the last term of grade ten and the first term of grade eleven. While students are as yet unsophisticated in their

appraisal of literature, they can begin to acquire criteria for making judgments. Criteria noted above that are not readily apparent to students should be explained and developed by the teacher.

There are criteria peculiar to picturebooks. Pictures alone, or pictures plus text convey both the story and its implications. Pictures or drawings are as important or more important than the text, for they do more than illustrate; they elaborate. Since most picturebooks have fewer than two thousand words, there is little space to develop character or plot. Pictures must help. Often the mood and the "moment" are conveyed by pictures or illustrations.

Perhaps the best way to indicate the relationship between the words and the pictures in a picturebook is to quote from statements made by the creators of such books. The quotations that follow are taken from: Egoff, Sheila, G.T. Stubbs and L.F. Ashley, eds. Only Connect: Readings on Children's Literature. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980.

* Maurice Sendak - Author and Illustrator from "An Interview with Maurice Sendak" conducted by Walter Lorraine.

> "To be an illustrator is to be a participant, someone who has something equally important to say as the writer of the book - occasionally something more important, but certainly never the writer's echo." (p. 326)

> "The illustrator is doing a tremendous job of expansion, of collaboration of illumination. But he must be discreet." (p. 328)

"When asked what elements make up a good picturebook Sendak includes: honesty and originality of vision." (p. 335)

* Roger Duvoisin - Illustrator of Children's Books from "Children's book illustration: the pleasures and problems".

"...illustrations as done by the superior artists are related to the text in a free, loose, subtle way; they leave the reader free to interpret the writing with complete freedom. And he has the added pleasure of doing the same with illustrations." (p. 312)

"One of the reasons for making a page which is well designed is to tell a story with more simplicity, more verve, clarity and impact; to give importance to what is important; to eliminate what destroys the freshness, the originality of the page; in other words, to make a page which will be more easily read by the child. A well-designed page will also educate the child's taste and his visual sense. A beautiful book is a beautiful object which the child may learn to love." (pp. 304-305)

"Illustration, in its narrowest sense, is an art whose purpose is to complement a text in a book or a magazine, to tell the story pictorially. But an illustration can tell a story without the help of a text. In its wider meaning, an illustration is a form of independent writing. It is pictorial literature." (p. 305)

"With their uninhibited vision, children do not see the world as we do. While we see only what interests us, they see everything. They have made no choice yet. We do not see what sort of buttons a man we pass in the street has on his coat, or how many there are, unless we are a button maker. But a child cares and will count the buttons if he can. He will care just as much about the tiny ladybug which falls accidentally on the table as about the grownups who sit around it. More, in fact. The child's interests are infinite and he sees the tiniest details of his world as well as the biggest forms. And he does not say, 'I do not understand'.

> He looks and sees. He lives among wonders and the children's book artist has only to take him by the hand, so to speak, to lead him toward the most imaginative adventures." (pp. 313-314)
>
> "Another quality children possess is their love and understanding of the humorous side of things. This also can be a rich source of ideas for the maker of children's books. Not only can he laugh with the child as he makes his books, but he can tell the most serious and important things while he laughs." (pp. 314-315)

* Edward Ardizzone - Artist and Story Writer from "Creation of a Picturebook".

> "In picturebooks the drawings, of course, are as important as, or more important than, the text. The text has to be short, not more than two thousand words. In fact, the text can give only bones to the story. The pictures, on the other hand, must do more than just illustrate the story. They must elaborate it. Characters have to be created pictorially because there is no space to do so verbally in the text. Besides the setting and characters, the subtleties of mood and moment have to be suggested." (p. 290)

Most picturebook stories end happily with the central character or characters, and by implication, the reader, much wiser for the experiences encountered. Each page has its own design and set-up, and rarely are two pages alike in the entire book. Often there are visual and verbal repetitions as in Ask Mr. Bear written in 1932 by Marjorie Flack. Three Billy Goats Gruff and Wanda Gag's Millions of Cats emphasize repetitive sentence patterns that children find so enjoyable.

Children's fiction writers must choose types of experiences that are understandable to children if they are to be successful. This does not mean that the story must

necessarily be realistic nor that the writer cannot challenge the imagination and intellect of the child; however, concepts that are too difficult for children to comprehend are better left to more adult literature.

Obviously the plot, characterization, theme and language range are not as complex as other forms of fiction, but the subtlety and simplicity of good children's stories have a significance and lasting impact on their readers and must never be dismissed as superficial or inconsequential.

* Emphasize with your students that there is room for personal likes and dislikes when assessing literature. There are many differing points of view and many reading tastes to take into account.

LESSON 3

By lesson three, having had access to many picturebooks, students realize the large number and variety of children's books. Working in small groups of five or six students, in this lesson they consider, in terms of classification, the books they have read in class. They answer the question, "What kinds of picturebooks are there for children to read?" They first will need to design the classification categories for the books and then assign each book to a classification, justifying their choices to the teacher and to other members of the class.

NOTE: You might consider using an overhead transparency in this lesson to record the responses from each group. These

will provide a more permanent record than the chalkboard and can be added to in later lessons. Some of the classifications that may be included are: fables; folktales, fairy stories, realistic adventures; dreams; stories in picture without text; animal fantasies; stories in verse; myths; legends; picture song books and science fiction stories.

LESSON 4

Distribute to your students copies of the "Critical Assessment" sheets that follow the next page. Students review these sheets with the teacher to determine whether or not headings should be added or deleted. The class, as a whole, decides on the final format of the sheets which all students will use as a basis for their picturebook critiques.

At this point in the lesson, review briefly the process for writing a literary critique. Students in grade eleven should have written critiques at the end of the grade ten year and in the early weeks of grade eleven.

Emphasize that the aim of the critique is to present an estimate of the total worth of the picturebook, both its strengths and its weaknesses. Caution your students that in making their judgments, they should not do so by applying the criteria listed on the assessment sheets in an indiscriminate and abstract manner. The sheets are only a guide to thinking, and not a list to be followed or commented on in order.

Review that the critique, to be valid, must be accompanied by specific evidence from the book. It is a form of

argument in which the critic attempts to convince the audience of the validity of his observations.

CRITICAL ASSESSMENT - STUDENT SHEETS

NOTE: The eight sheets that comprise this assessment are provided for your guidance and are not intended to limit appreciation of the picturebooks which you read. Terms describing aspects of a book such as plot, setting or characterization are merely suggestions. You may substitute any or all of these terms with choices of your own.

STUDENT SHEETS CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

SUITABILITY OF THE FORMAT

Put a check mark in the appropriate column:

	unacceptable → excellent				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. size and style of type					
2. page layout					
3. illustrations					
4. length of book for intended audience					
5. use of colour					
6. use of texture					
7. physical size and shape of book for student handling					
8. quality of binding					
9. quality of paper					
10. ratio of print/pictures					
11. title page					
12. end papers					

QUALITY OF THE CONTENT

Check either yes or no for each question below:

Questions to ask:	YES	NO
1. Is there obvious stereotyping of racial, national, religious, or other groups that should be avoided?		
2. Is the subject one which young children tend to find interesting?		
3. Will the content be clear and understandable to the child?		

CHARACTERIZATION

1. Put a check mark beside the terms which apply to the characters of the book:

ideal	selfish	exaggerated
despicable	inconsistent	believable
fanciful	generous	contrived
stock type	dynamic	static
interesting	caricature	unique
	understandable	exciting

2. Put a check mark in the appropriate column to answer the question about how the character is revealed.

	Very little → A great deal				
	1	2	3	4	5
(a) How much does the author tell?					
(b) How much does he allow to unfold as the story progresses					

PLOT DEVELOPMENT

Put a check mark beside the terms which apply to the plot:

well developed	chronological	logical
simple	factual	plausible ending
complicated	fanciful	one main conflict
credible	unified	conflict resolved

SETTING

Put a check mark beside the terms which apply to the setting:

general	important to story development	within child's experience
specific	urban	foreign
present	rural	local
past	distant	

THEME

Put a check mark beside the terms which apply to the theme:

appropriate to children	religious
easily perceived	optimistic
concerned with human beings	pessimistic
moral	realistic
positive	idealistic

MOOD OR ATMOSPHERE

Put a check mark beside the terms which apply to the mood or atmosphere:

suspicious	frightening	apprehensive
exhilarating	encouraging	cautious
sombre	terrifying	jovial
calm/peaceful	intense	sad

STYLE AND STRUCTURE

Put a check mark beside the terms that apply:

concepts geared to little children	a great deal of description	didactic
concepts and ideas clearly presented	includes colloquial language	compact
sentence structure complex	a great deal of figurative language	story parts easily identifiable
sentences short and simple	a great deal of dialogue	plausible ending

POINT OF VIEW

Check the appropriate boxes below:

objective	☐	changing	☐	particular nation	☐
subjective	☐	particular community	☐	specific time in history	☐
fixed	☐	particular structure	☐		

NARRATOR

Check the appropriate box below:

1. first person ☐

2. third person ☐

3. omniscient (the all-knowing) ☐

SPECIAL DEVICES (TECHNIQUES)

Check the following that apply:

element of surprise	foreshadowing
suspense	repetition
exaggeration	understatement
humour	specific dialect
personification	irony
contrast	symbolism
alliteration	appeal to the imagination

VALUES

Choose either yes or no below:

YES	NO

1. integral part of the book

2. contribute to character formation in the book

3. book advocates particular values

PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

Check one or more below:

1. inform

2. entertain

3. persuade

4. teach a lesson

5. present a point of view

GENERAL APPEAL TO CHILDREN

In the spaces provided, list in point form up to five reasons why you believe the book would and/or would not appeal to children.

WOULD APPEAL	WOULD NOT APPEAL
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

LESSON 5

The students make critical comment not only about what is said by their peers, but also about how it is spoken. The teacher joins the discussion to point out to students important aspects of speaking aloud informally; confidence in what one has to say; speaking easily and fluently; noting the oral skills of proper pitch, tone, speed, volume and intonation to suit the ideas or information being presented. These skills are especially important to oral reading, which is one form of speaking aloud.

It is also important that students understand the concept that when reading aloud, the reader must interpret the printed word, not only for himself, but also for the listener. They must realize that it is important to speak in a well-modulated voice, at a moderate speed, paying close attention to the punctuation and to the intonation used since both aid meaning. The voice needs to be moderately pitched to avoid monotony and the speaker should maintain eye contact with the listener(s) to ensure their attention.

LESSON 6

Begin by reading aloud the picturebook, Ira Sleeps Over by Bernard Waber, demonstrating to the members of the class the skills of dramatic reading. These are described in the teacher's guide for lesson five.

Work with the whole class in leading a discussion of the picturebook. Since students will be working in small

groups later in the lesson to consider specific details of the book, your questions should be general in nature.

These questions might include discussion about the information and the impression conveyed by the cover. Since the story develops very quickly, students could be questioned to explain how the author accomplishes this.

Consider the reasons for the physical set-up of the book since each page is distinctly different from every other page. Discover with the students where the problem in the story is introduced. Note, through questioning, the repeated lines and the effect of that repetition on the reader.

Discuss the peer pressure evident in the story and the impact that it has on Ira's actions. What information is conveyed through print? Through pictures? Do the two complement each other? Does the story teach a lesson? What is the lesson? How is Reggie at the end of the story different from Reggie at the beginning?

Since students have been criticizing many other picturebooks up to this point in the unit, and since they have the benefit of an assessment sheet given to them in lesson four, allow small groups of three or four pupils to determine, through discussion, the specific aspects of the storybook that they wish to identify.

For homework the students begin to write a three to five page critique for Ira Sleeps Over based on the knowledge that they have gained, not only in today's lesson, but generally, since the beginning of the unit.

LESSON 7

This is a working period for the members of your class. The teacher's role is that of resource person, helping individual students to clarify their ideas and to formulate these in a well-planned and well-developed critique. As you move from working with one student to another, make note of problems that occur repeatedly among members of the class and those that are peculiar to particular individuals. This information will provide the focus for teaching in subsequent lessons. The students complete their critique for homework.

LESSON 8

During this period students work in pairs, reading and commenting on each other's critique, noting the strengths initially, and then the weaknesses. They proofread and appraise, suggest where ideas should be added or deleted, and where words should be substituted or re-arranged.

Having received advice and help from both the teacher and classmates, students at this point in the lessons complete the re-writing of their critiques for homework and submit them next day for final teacher evaluation.

PART B

Unit Overview

Lessons - Part B

Teacher's Guide

OVERVIEW OF THE LESSONS PART B

USING CHILDREN'S PICTUREBOOKS AS A STIMULUS FOR CREATIVE WRITING IN SECONDARY SCHOOL - GRADE 11

Aims and Objectives	Concept and Skill Development	Teaching Strategies	Resources	Student Assessment	Time-Line
GENERAL -To develop student creativity and ingenuity through a personal writing activity -To demonstrate through creative writing the degree of mastery of basic skills -To exercise the imagination SPECIFIC -To write a child's picturebook and to read it to a youngster in a nearby elementary school -To provide a vehicle for students to develop and practise the mechanics of writing, revision, and proofreading -To involve students in a critical assessment of their own learning and of the	Concepts 1. Creative writing allows one to practise and perfect the mechanical and rudimentary aspects of communication. 2. Personal satisfaction is gained in producing something not only for oneself but for others. 3. The study of English is creative as well as prescribed. 4. Writing requires hard work. Skill Development - Writing Area Literary -developing a logical, coherent and simple plot -choosing an apt setting -creating consistent characterization -attention to the structure of a story (introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution)	Whole Class -Lessons taught in style, structure and mechanics as need arises before students begin to write. Small Group -Students who demonstrate a particular weakness in writing may be grouped and taught by the teacher. Individual -Students call on the teacher as a resource person, advisor, and critic as their writing and work with illustrations progresses.	-a large number of children's picturebooks. Resource Books Scharbach, Alexander. Critical Reading and Writing. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965. Plageman, Bentz. How to Write a Story. New York: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Co., 1970.	INFORMAL -Teacher observation as students work on their picturebooks -Teacher acting as a resource person, encouraging, guiding and helping students to monitor their own work as picturebooks progress -Other students' appraisal FORMAL 1. Dummy copy is submitted for written assessment by the teacher 25 marks - content 10 marks - mechanics 15 marks - style 2. Final picturebook using above assessment format.	20 40 minute classroom periods

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OVERVIEW OF THE LESSONS PART B (continued) .....

Aims and Objectives	Concept and Skill Development	Teaching Strategies	Resources	Student Assessment	Time-Line
project itself upon completion of the picturebook	-using figurative language effectively -using special devices (suspense, surprise ending, humour, et cetera) -establishing mood or atmosphere Mechanical -using proper punctuation -using variety of sentence kinds and sentence length -using vocabulary suitable to age of children for whom designed -ability to condense material -writing dialogue -ability to organize material -ability to outline -ability to block out entire story -attention to maintaining proper verb tenses -ability to proofread effectively -learning the art of rewriting and revision -editing and proofreading Oral -reading the finished picturebook to young children using appropriate voice-pitch, volume, speed and intonation			* Students to be made aware of process of evaluation	

TEACHER'S GUIDE

PART B - Using Children's Picturebooks as a Stimulus for Creative Writing in the Secondary School - Grade 11

General Introduction

In the pages that follow you will find ideas, suggestions and approaches that will help you guide your students in the writing of their picturebooks. During this part of the unit they are reinforcing and extending their concepts of narrative development. Since they have spent the last eight lessons critically evaluating several commercial picturebooks, the genre is fresh in their minds.

Part B of the unit is structured for twenty class periods of forty minutes each. The first ten lessons are designed to be taught by the teacher and the following ten assigned as work periods, devoted to individual student writing. The teacher, during the final ten lessons, acts not as an examiner at this point, but as a resource person who responds to student writing as it takes shape, helping students individually with all aspects of their work.

While it is unlikely that we can teach students "how" to write creatively, we can try to give them direction in developing the linguistic and technical tools they will need to allow their abilities and creative impulses to flourish.

Assessment is a continuous process as the writing of the picturebooks progresses. Students evaluate their own

work and receive constructive feedback from both their peers and the teacher. This method of evaluation is intended to promote a positive attitude on the part of the students toward the immediate project, but also toward the process of writing.

It is intended also to create a climate of trust in the classroom, one in which the student understands that he has time to develop what he writes before he has to submit a final copy.

Student writing in the unit includes both transactional and poetic writing. During Part A the students write a critique of a picturebook that requires transactional writing (described in the Preamble); however, in Part B they write their own picturebooks; they begin with expressive writing in an unstructured gathering of ideas progressing to the planned and patterned writing of a story referred to in the Preamble as "poetic writing".

As a whole, the unit attempts to provide some balance between expository and imaginative writing so that students understand that writing has a variety of purposes, is directed to a variety of audiences and thus, has a variety of forms.

TEACHER'S GUIDE - PART B

LESSONS 1 & 2

Begin by asking each student to bring to class five picturebooks which he especially likes. These will serve as samples or references as students begin to write their own books.

You will need to begin in lesson one by reviewing some of the characteristics of a short story. Students have studied this genre in both grades nine and ten; therefore, these lessons will be mainly a review. Note that while there are no definitive characteristics common to all stories, there are some broad aspects that are identifiable.

Students have been critically appraising picturebooks during Part A of this unit and should be knowledgeable about the story as a literary genre.

Conduct lessons one and two as whole class lessons so that all students benefit from the contributions of their classmates.

Among the many aspects of a picturebook to be discussed are the following: the story is brief; it has few characters and a simple plot; character is revealed rather than developed, usually by what a person says, by what others say about him or by what he does in the story. The good writer presents the main character(s) at an important point in his life when he undergoes an experience that affects a change in outlook, attitude or behaviour; the print

and pictures complement each other to convey the message of the book; the story should have an identifiable beginning, middle and ending; the introduction should present the characters, describe the setting, give a minimum of background information, and establish a definite atmosphere; details should be kept to only those that are essential and are added only when they are important to the story outcome or development; the major problem or conflict in the story should be posed early so that the story moves swiftly to a climax; a good story is told from a consistent point of view; the theme, ideally, should be obvious to the careful reader; the writer may use some special effects among which may be: suspense, surprise, exaggeration, humour and foreshadowing; clues need to be supplied along the way so that the ending is just and acceptable in terms of the story.

Encourage your students to make a list of these characteristics as the lessons progress for reference when they begin to write their own picturebooks.

LESSONS 3 - 5

In lessons three to five, concentrate on the mechanical and composition skills needed to write a good story. Discuss the importance of proper punctuation and spelling since both are instrumental to accurate communication of ideas; point out the importance of dialogue in setting the story in motion and in bringing the characters to life; practise writing samples of dialogue emphasizing the correct use of

quotation marks for direct speech; point out the four kinds of sentences that may be found in stories: assertive, interrogative, imperative and exclamatory; paragraphs must be well-developed, unified and coherent; notice that the diction chosen for good stories is vivid and precise and that economy of language is characteristic of picturebooks; in addition, verb tenses should remain consistent throughout the story.

Without the mechanical and composition tools to work with, the writer has little chance of success. Although the art of writing becomes a personal development, the disciplines essential to the art must be mastered by the successful writer. When errors are made in the mechanics, a break occurs in the reader's reception of the story and his comprehension and enjoyment are interrupted, however fleetingly.

LESSONS 6 - 10

These lessons concentrate on the "writing process" delineated on pages 19-23 of the Preamble.

The three main steps of the process presented are: the prewriting, the writing and the postwriting stages. It is important to note that although accomplished writers do not necessarily proceed through a series of defined steps, the methodology presented here provides beginning writers with a starting point from which to develop their own style as they become proficient.

An idea for a story may come "all at once" to a writer or it may be generated and collected in fragments. The ideas

may come from observations, from one's imagination, from real life situations or experiences with travel, television, books, movies, music, et cetera.

Once the writer has an idea he wants to explore, he has to decide on the purpose for his writing. He may not do this consciously, but he proceeds to inform, instruct, persuade or entertain. Likewise, he generally writes for a specific audience which may be himself, friends, a specific person, or perhaps he writes for a general audience.

Obviously he has to choose a form in which to clothe his ideas. He may write a story, poem, play, picturebook, report, critique, essay, letter or one of many other literary forms.

From among all the ideas that he might wish to explore, he makes a selection, determining the important from the unimportant in choosing what to include.

Next he needs to plan and organize his material into lists, notes, diagrams, outlines, et cetera in which he orders his idea and blocks out his paragraphs.

At this point the writer moves from prewriting activities to the actual writing stage. He writes a first draft using single words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs as he experiments with his material.

Next he revises this rough draft once, or perhaps several times by adding, deleting, substituting, rewording, combining and re-arranging words, phrases, sentences as well as whole paragraphs as he gives his ideas shape.

At the same time, he tries to avoid needless repetition by re-stating and re-ordering ideas. He needs to sequence events accurately and to vary his sentence patterns to gain the effect on the reader he intends.

When he has a final copy that is acceptable to him, he proofreads his work noting spelling, grammar and usage errors, sentence structure, punctuation and capitalization.

Finally he is ready to "go public" with his creation. This he may accomplish through magazines, newspapers or other publications, or in the form of a book. This is the sharing or appreciating stage of writing that some writers wish to enjoy. Others prefer to write for private enjoyment alone.

In a picturebook the illustrations or drawings should complement and elaborate on the text. They need to be simple enough so that repeated drawings page after page are not too tedious or time-consuming to produce.

Variety in placement of text and illustration on the pages of children's picturebooks merits emphasizing since each page ideally should be unique and a new adventure for youngsters.

LESSONS 11 - 20

Students write during these periods demonstrating the knowledge and skills they have learned to help them write. The teacher works constantly with individual students as they work toward a completed book.

Following the completion of lesson twenty, make arrangements with your feeder school classes to have students read their books to children. A period or two should be devoted to class discussion following this experience so that your students can share the responses they receive and evaluate the learning that the unit afforded them.

The picturebooks are submitted to the teacher for final evaluation.

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FOR THE STUDENT

STORY CHECKLIST

Ask the following questions about the construction of your story when you are editing and revising:

	YES	NO
1. Does your story have a simple plot?		
2. Does the plot of your story move swiftly to a conclusion?		
3. Have you supplied clues in your story to support the outcome?		
4. Are all parts of your story identifiable: introduction/inciting force/ rising action/climax/falling action/ resolution?		
5. Is your story a suitable length - not too long?		
6. Is your introduction brief so that the action of your story begins right away?		
7. Have you established the setting?		
8. Does your story have a definite mood or atmosphere?		
9. Have you kept the number of characters to a minimum?		
10. Are your characters consistently portrayed?		
11. Have you maintained a consistent point of view?		

	YES	NO
12. Is there only one main conflict?		
13. Is the theme of your story evident to the careful reader?		
14. Do the illustrations and the text complement each other?		
15. Have you followed the purpose you decided on for your story: to inform/ to instruct/to persuade?		
16. Have you used some special devices: e.g. foreshadowing/surprise/humour/ exaggeration/repetition/suspense?		
17. Does your choice of diction suit the characters and plot?		
18. Have you punctuated your sentences properly, spelled all words correctly?		
19. Have you written in gramatically correct sentence form?		
20. Are your sentences of varying lengths?		
21. Have you included a variety of sentence kinds: assertive/interrogative/ imperative/exclamatory?		
22. Does your story have loose/balanced/ and periodic sentence constructions?		
23. Are your tenses consistent?		
24. Do you think your story is entertaining?		
25. Is it likely to engage the child's imagination?		

FOR THE STUDENT

Considerations for Reading Your Picturebook Aloud

Remember that your voice and mannerisms must create a dramatic situation for the children; literature read aloud is a shared experience among the writer, the reader and the listener. All participate in the exercise of the imagination. It is important that children hear the language spoken well in order to develop a love of the spoken word and to hear syntactic patterns that may not, at present, be in their language structure. Also, prose and poetry both have dramatic and lyric qualities that are experienced best when read aloud.

Since a child's listening vocabulary and comprehension are usually ahead of his ability to read for himself, he needs to hear literature read often to extend his knowledge and love of language. Children will often join in familiar lines and speak individual sentences, phrases and rhymes with the reader, developing pronunciation, enunciation and articulation skills.

What Kinds of Reaction Can You Expect From Your Audience?

There will always be responses that you cannot possibly anticipate; however, there are some reactions that are fairly common to primary children enjoying literature read or told to them. Children seldom tire of stories or poems that they love. Cries of "Read it over again, please," are very common. They will chant, often in chorus, repeating for pleasure, familiar repetitive or favourite lines.

They will clap their hands with glee when a villain gets caught or when the hero succeeds, even though they have heard the story many times. With spontaneous dramatization they will respond to what they hear without shyness; in fact, very often they remain oblivious to others around them as they re-create the story.

However, when stories that have little substance or appeal to the imagination are read or told to children, they are very quick to express their negative feelings. They may become inattentive or make disparaging comments about what is taking place. When you read your own book to children, you must be prepared to accept their very frank assessment.

How to Involve the Children in the Story

Including the youngsters in the presentation of your story makes the literature "come alive" and it delights the children. This can be accomplished in several different ways. You can begin by encouraging children to repeat the story or poem with you in chorus. They may wish to enact sections of the story with which they are familiar. Perhaps they may pretend they are the characters in the story by using hand puppets that re-create the dialogue.

Dr. Lorna Haworth of the Faculty of Education at McGill University wrote an article in 1979 entitled "The Greening of Literature" in which she summed up the benefits of participatory reading:

> Through their oral interpretation, children are directly involved with plot, setting and character development in stories and poems containing both contemporary and traditional approaches to life. They are obliged to analyze situations and characters, synthesize their findings, and then make an evaluation in order to be able to make a clear and forceful presentation to an audience. Given the freedom to use imagination, reflective thought processes and basic oral language skills, children are able to respond positively, understandingly and creatively to literature.[1]

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[1]Lorna Haworth, "The Greening of Literature", in Highway One (Winter, 1979), pp. 6-12.

APPENDIX 1

(a) Bibliography of Children's Picturebooks

(b) Picturebooks in Other Lands

(c) Fables

(d) Books With Repetitive Lines

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF CHILDREN'S PICTUREBOOKS

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APPENDIX 2

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