



THE GREATER SEATTLE BUREAU OF FEARLESS IDEAS

**THE WRITING ROOM (formally Wrobot) FIELD TRIP
PRE-and-POST VISIT MATERIALS**

INTRODUCTION

Thanks so much for signing up for a Field Trip with The Greater Seattle Bureau of Fearless Ideas! Our mission is to help your students experience writing and storytelling both collaboratively and individually, and encourage a sense of fun and confidence surrounding writing. Telling stories is an essential part of being human; stories help us learn about the world around us as we experience the thoughts and actions of characters in a story.

In The Writing Room Field Trip, students embark on a two-hour-long storytelling journey during which they will devise characters, develop settings, and integrate action-packed twists. The Field Trip culminates in each student receiving a personalized, bound book and the accomplishment of becoming a published writer.

When your class visits The Bureau of Fearless Ideas, our team of volunteers will help navigate the students through the writing experience; we will all work together to challenge your young writers to collaboratively write high-quality, original books for an audience of 1st graders. With the whole group, we will guide a discussion of essential elements of good stories. After this discussion, students will separate into their Writing Room groups to write a book as a small, organized team under the guidance of our volunteers. The individual writers will assign themselves different roles to ensure the completion of the book.

By the end of the trip, the class will generate five unique stories. Each student will receive a bound copy of her/his team's book, and you will receive a copy of each group's book. Each will have two included illustrations and a page for an individual student illustration.

Students will be writing fiction – spontaneous fiction! – and we realize that this might be a change for many students. Don't worry. We use active engagement and guided practice to inform their stories, but the ideas will be their own inventions. We provide differentiated support and guidance to ensure the stories still include essential elements. That being said, our main goal is to make writing as engaging and exciting as possible; we don't require that students write a certain amount, contribute a minimum number of ideas during the group writing process, or employ specific devices – we want to instill a sense of fun and confidence about writing, and know that this may look different for different students.

YOUR ROLE

During the Field Trip, we may ask you to help with discipline or managing class behavior since you know students better than we do. Otherwise, you are welcome to observe the Field Trip.

It is extremely helpful to us if you can pre-split the group into five even(ish) small groups. We name the groups after important space-related robots and technology, and it's extra-helpful if you assign these to students as well. The groups are:

1. **R2-D2**
2. **Mars Discovery Rover**
3. **Data**
4. **Hubble Telescope**
5. **Wall-E**

When students are pre-split and already wearing nametags, the Field Trip can start right away when you arrive at The Bureau of Fearless Ideas.

PRE-TRIP DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

As our Field Trip is based on a combination of storytelling and collaborative writing, it's important for all students to be familiar with the main elements of a story: character, setting, plot, and conflict/resolution (problem/solution).

Find below some vocabulary words and activities to help prepare students for the trip.

VOCABULARY

Title	Setting	Conflict/Problem	Story Arc
Character	Dialogue	Conclusion/Solution	Plot

CHARACTER

Developing strong characters is one starting point for writing. Encourage students to envision a character and give him/her a voice.

1. Break students into small groups. Provide the same photograph or magazine clipping (or a portrait of an interesting-looking person, such as Walt Whitman) to each group and ask them to answer the following questions:
 - a. *What is his or her name?*
 - b. *Who is this character?*
 - c. *What is special or unique about him/her?*
 - d. *Where is s/he?*
 - e. *How does s/he feel about being there? Why?*
 - f. *What does this character dream about?*
2. After answering each question and providing details about the photograph, have each student write a letter as though s/he were the character, asking for something that the character wants or dreams about. Encourage students to think of the kind of words that his/her character might use.

SETTING

A strong sense of place allows students to really develop the environment in which their story takes place.

1. Ask students to finish a story that begins with one of the following sentences:

- a. *The night was hot. It was so hot that stray cats didn't dare walk on the sidewalks, afraid that their feet would get burned. In the distance...*
 - b. *It had never been so cold. Icicles hung low from the roof's gutters, and everything from the trees to the ground was covered with the thickest ice I'd ever seen. I thought...*
2. Think about the ways in which setting influences a story, can change the direction of a story, and define the tone.

CONFLICT/PROBLEM

We will focus on story arc in this Field Trip; many students will be well-prepared due to conflict and conflict-resolution being often-addressed topics in curricula. Identifying the Introduction, Rising Action, Climax, and Falling Action of fiction stories as you explore them in class can be a very helpful preparation. Students should also be aware that conflict is more than character vs. character. Are they reading stories that focus on character vs. self, character vs. society, character vs. nature? Do longer stories have different kinds of conflicts?

ENDING/RESOLUTION

Everyone knows how to end a story with “THE END.” Think of some new ways.

1. Choose three stories that the whole class will know – books, movies, fairy tales, etc. – and divide the class into groups of two or three and have them change the ending of each story. Encourage students to invent original endings that stay with the reader. They are NOT allowed to end the story with – of course – “The End.”

POST-VISIT DISCUSSION AND ACTIVITIES

When you return to your classroom, we hope that the experiences that students had at The Bureau of Fearless Ideas will infuse a sense of joy and enthusiasm into writing stories back at school.

A few suggestions for keeping storytelling momentum high:

1. Showcase.
 - a. Have your students read their stories to a public audience (other students, the principal, lunch room attendants, their parents, etc.)
 - b. Host a story time that showcases student work.
2. Write a sequel.
 - a. Using the same process and techniques, as well as elements of storytelling, guide students to create a sequel. Students may want to incorporate a new setting, character, or resurrect an old, compelling villain.
3. Create Puppets.
 - a. Puppets are a terrific way for students to engage with storytelling. Create simple puppets of one of the story's main characters to engage with elements of the character's persona. Use this character to develop a new story, including a setting, conflict and resolution. Act it out.
4. Write Comic Books.
 - a. Translating a story to a visual format allows students to focus on the pace and tone of the story, as well as exploring another mode of storytelling. This can be done by drawing a grid with a chosen number of boxes (panels) and asking students to fill them in with the story, one piece at a time. Students will have to learn to choose their words carefully and tell their story economically.

Thank you again for signing up and attending this Field Trip. Please share your experiences that you had with us by registering again and telling your colleagues about your time at The Bureau of Fearless Ideas. We hope that the visit inspired you and your students to love writing, and to continue to integrate interactive writing experiences into your classroom work.

Please have students who are interested explore our weekend writing workshops at www.fearlessideas.org/programs/workshops, and if you have any questions, contact bryan@fearlessideas.org or our general email at info@fearlessideas.org.

Thank you for your interest and enthusiasm, and all our very best.