

## The Fiction Cycle

When it comes to writing fiction, our students present us with a paradox. Since they love to read fiction, it's no wonder that they are eager to try their hands at this genre. But there is a major mismatch between what they typically read (novels) and what they write (very short stories). Books like *Harry Potter* don't provide very good models for how to write a story in a small number of pages.

For this reason, when you marinate your students in fiction, try to seek out pieces of short fiction that reflect the kind of fiction students write. (See Bibliography, Appendix C). Short stories by Gary Soto, Jacqueline Woodson, Cynthia Rylant, as well as selected picture books, will give kids an image of what they might shoot for.

This cycle assumes that students have already worked with the lessons that appear in the Launch and Narrative Cycles. Notice that we include only one lesson on character development and none on setting. It's not that character and setting aren't important in fiction

writing. We trust students have learned about these elements in earlier cycles.

If you haven't worked with either of the narrative cycles, or if you think students need to revisit earlier ideas, include some of the lessons on character and setting from earlier cycles. In the fiction cycle we introduce and develop two new ideas: point of view and story shape.

Writing fiction is a bit like surfing a wave—it's a lot harder than it looks. This doesn't mean you shouldn't give students a chance to write fiction. But you need to be realistic and generous when their writing doesn't live up to your expectations. Make sure you point out strengths in their writing.

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- **Publishing Possibilities:** story shelf in classroom library or the main office, books donated to local doctors' offices waiting rooms, a class anthology of short stories (themed or not), visiting authors get-together, hosting storytime lunch or snack.

## Fiction Cycle

### WEEK ONE

- I-8 Use Plot, Place, and Character in a Story
- I-11 Embellish an Idea
- I-28 Work with an External Conflict

### WEEK TWO

- I-29 Work with an Internal Conflict
- I-18 Value Your Experience
- I-26 Make Your Story Believable

### WEEK THREE

- I-30 Write in the First Person
- I-31 Write in the Second Person
- I-32 Write in the Third Person

### WEEK FOUR

- D-28 Create Suspense in Fiction
- D-27 Control How Time Moves

### WEEK FIVE

- D-34 Use a Triangular Structure
- D-32 Use a Snapshot Structure
- D-35 Write a Circular Story or Poem

### WEEK SIX

- D-17 Cut to Your Lead
- D-19 Lead with the Big Picture
- Choose *ONE* of the lessons on endings (D-23, D-24, D-25, D-26)

### WEEK SEVEN

- L-4 Remove Those Annoying Little Qualifiers
- L-11 Combine Short Sentences
- L-14 Vary the Length of Sentences