

Grades K-1

# Getting Ready to Write



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**Empowering™**  
Writers

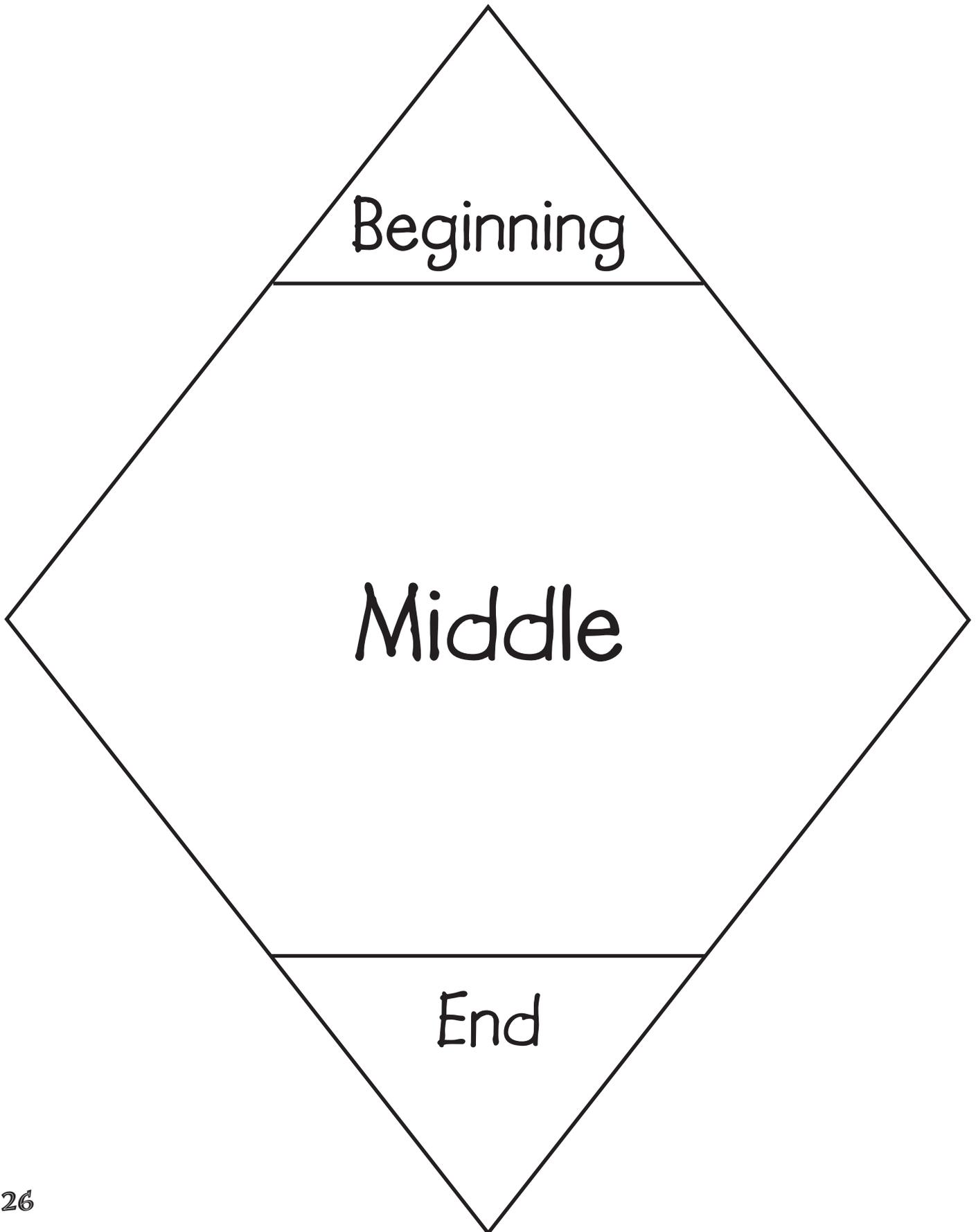
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# Table of Contents

<b>Developmental Stages</b> .....	Page 7
<b>Desired Learning Outcomes</b> .....	Pages 8-9
<b>Pattern of Story</b> .....	Page 10
<b>Elaborative Detail</b> .....	Page 35
<b>Sensory Activities</b> .....	Page 44
<b>Writing Elaborative Detail</b> .....	Page 73
<b>Feelings</b> .....	Page 92
<b>Vocabulary Building Activities</b> .....	Page 103
<b>Suspense</b> .....	Page 145
<b>Book Analysis Form</b> .....	Page 172
<b>Writing Awareness Assessment</b> .....	Page 173
<b>Timeline Scope and Sequence</b> .....	Page 174
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	Page 178
<b>CD Lyrics</b> .....	Page 179
<b>CD</b> .....	Back Cover

The CD *All the Write Songs* is found in the sleeve in the back cover of the book. It contains songs that introduce, review, and reinforce key themes presented. Songs are referenced throughout the book, as appropriate.

# Simplified Writing Diamond



# Identifying Story Critical Elements

## Objectives:

- Students will identify story critical characters, settings, and objectives in narrative stories.

## Materials:

Read aloud story, selected paper, chart, or template.

## Procedure:

- 1.) Read a story and identify a story critical character, setting, or object. For example, in Tomie DePaola's "Strega Nona" the story critical *characters* would be Strega Nona and Big Anthony. The story critical *setting* is the village. The story critical *object* is the magic pasta pot. (Numerous examples from classic literature are provided on p.38)
- 2.) Lead students in identifying these elements in familiar stories. If students can pick out at least two story critical elements (character, setting, or object) in stories they hear or read, they will eventually look for and create similar elements in stories of their own. They will learn to focus elaborative detail on relevant, story critical characters, settings, and objects in their own stories.

### NOTE:

A poster of the following "Story Critical Character/ Setting/Object chart is available in the Empowering Writers K - 1 Poster Set: K - 1 Story Posters. Also, a fun reinforcement of the story critical "who, what, and where of story" is the song "Who? Where? What?" from the enclosed CD All the Write Songs, lyrics p. 182.



**Who?** \_\_\_\_\_

(Story Critical Character)

**Where?** \_\_\_\_\_

(Story Critical Setting)

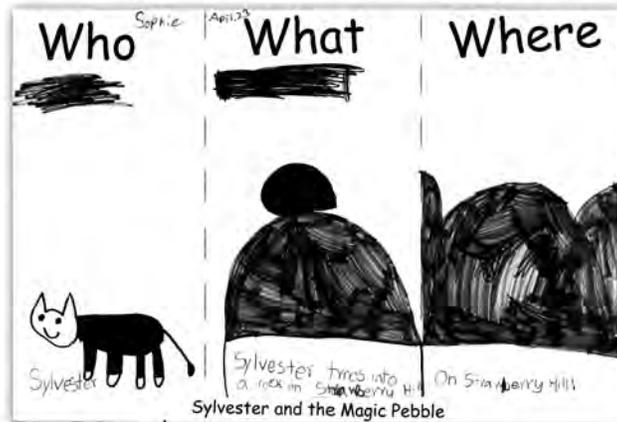
**What?** \_\_\_\_\_

(Story Critical Object)

# Extension Activities for Who, Where, What

## Art Connection

Fold a large piece of paper in thirds and head the respective sections: WHO? WHERE? WHAT? Have children draw the story critical CHARACTER, SETTING, and OBJECT. Label these, if they are able.



## Flip Book

Create a class flip-the-strip book. The top strip of each page is devoted to story critical characters.

(Students each complete one page by cutting out a magazine picture of a character and gluing it on the page.) The middle strip of each page is devoted to setting, and the bottom strip to objects. Students can flip the strips to create numerous combinations of characters, settings, and objects. These combinations can be used as the basis for imaginative story telling. Students can tell the audience about the who, what, and where of a potential story, experiment with numerous combinations and variations. Students who are developmentally able may write a sentence about each story critical element, hence developing a simple story map or summary. Use the template, p.41 for this purpose.



# Top Banana

## Objectives:

- Students will describe the “top banana” (special student of the week).
- Students will aid the teacher in writing fluent sentences on the chart paper incorporating good sentence variety and vivid vocabulary.

## Materials:

chart paper, markers

## Procedure:

- 1.) Gather students and give each a turn to say something positive about the special student, the **“top banana.”**
- 2.) Typically students will provide bare bones description such as, *“Brianna is good at math. Brianna is a good reader. Brianna shares her markers. Brianna is good at art.”* Chart and read the sentences aloud emphasizing the redundant sentence structure. Ask students what they notice. (Brianna is..., Brianna is...).
- 3.) Now rechart these in more powerful ways: *“I’m impressed by her math skills. Everyone notices that Brianna reads really well. One thing we all appreciate is that she shares her markers with others. I am always amazed by Brianna’s art work.”*
- 4.) When the week is over, give the chart to the “top banana” as a special keepsake.
- 5.) Keep this technique in mind as you move throughout the school year. For example, at Thanksgiving, instead of having all students write *“I am thankful for\_\_.”* Provide alternatives such as, *“We’re all grateful for\_\_. I feel gratitude when\_\_. I’m thankful when \_\_. I appreciate \_\_. I feel lucky to have \_\_. \_\_is something I am thankful for. \_\_ gives me a thankful heart.”*

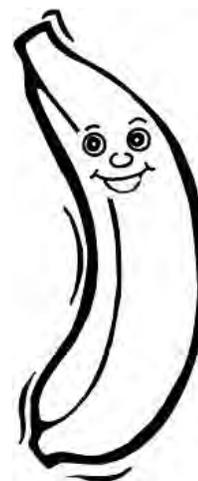


### NOTE:

Use the song “Top Banana” from the enclosed CD *All the Write Songs*, lyrics p. 190 to introduce each “Top Banana” in your class and to remind students to begin their sentences in a wide variety of ways.

## Sentence Starters:

- |                                      |                                       |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| I’m always impressed with ____.      | I admire the way ____.                |
| She/he impresses us with ____.       | One of his/her gifts is ____.         |
| Everybody notices ____.              | Don’t you just love ____.             |
| This classroom star excels at ____.  | You can’t miss his/her ____.          |
| I respect the way ____.              | One look at ____ and you notice ____. |
| I get a kick out of ____.            | I am amazed by ____.                  |
| Everyone comments on ____.           | You can count on him/her for ____.    |
| What would we do without ____?       | We’re grateful for ____.              |
| Have you seen ____?                  | Thank goodness for ____.              |
| I am honored to call ____ my friend. | I’m crazy about ____.                 |



# First Grade-Desired Learning Outcomes

**I**n first grade most students actually begin to write simple narrative stories. The first grade activities in this book can be used as pre-writing, awareness building experiences which are modeled and directed by the teacher. Since some students may be ready to translate these experiences into their own writing, this application may be encouraged at the teacher's discretion. *Before beginning the first grade activities in this book it is advisable to review the kindergarten learning outcomes to insure that students are ready for this next level of experience. Feel free to repeat any of the kindergarten activities for review and reinforcement.*

## The teacher will:

Read and discuss a wide range of stories and identify the genre (narrative/expository) using story templates and directed questions

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Use classic stories and story templates to point out character, setting, story problem or adventure in narrative

---

Review the concept of FIRST, NEXT, LAST

---

Introduce beginning, middle, end in the context of the narrative

---

Discuss the middle section of story by identifying a problem or adventure

---

Discuss and review the five senses

---

Read descriptive segments for the purpose of identifying sensory details in writing

---

Model the use of sensory details in writing through the use of questioning and sentence variety

---

Introduce language for what feelings look like

---

Present suspense as simple riddles and use to model suspenseful segments

---

## The students will:

Recognize and distinguish between the characteristics of narrative and expository stories and make predictions about genre based on title and cover

---

Identify the main character, setting, story problem or adventure in the narrative

---

Understand the basic concept of FIRST, NEXT, LAST

---

Summarize narrative stories in terms of beginning, middle, end

---

Identify story problems and solutions or adventures and conclusions

---

Distinguish among the five senses

---

Identify the ways in which authors use the five senses to describe story critical characters, settings, and objects

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Develop an awareness of the thought process of an author in creating descriptive segments and learning the language of story. Some students will apply these skills in their own writing.

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Recognize facial expressions and body language that express feelings and use language to describe feelings

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Recognize suspenseful segments and use word referents to create suspenseful descriptions

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## Kindergarten-Desired Learning Outcomes

**T**here are many purposes for writing in kindergarten-most involve writing at the most basic level: expressing a thought or idea on the page. The purpose may be to label, record, or reflect. The activities in this book are designed for a different purpose-to begin to lay the groundwork for eventually writing a narrative story. Thus, the activities in this book are pre-writing activities that raise an awareness of the characteristics of narratives, the pattern, shape, sequence, and language of story. The focus is on conceptualizing rather than actually writing a narrative. Of course, students who are developmentally ready may begin to apply the skills to their own writing.

### The teacher will:

Read and discuss a wide range of stories and discuss the genre (narrative/expository) using story templates and directed questions

Use classic stories and story templates to point out character, setting, story problem or adventure in narrative

Reinforce the concept of FIRST, NEXT, LAST (which is prerequisite to the literary terms beginning, middle, end) through the use of the simple sequencing activities provided

Introduce beginning, middle, end in the context of the narrative

Identify the five senses by using the sensory games provided

Read descriptive segments for the purpose of identifying sensory details in writing

Model the use of sensory details in writing through the use of questioning and sentence variety

Introduce language for what feelings look like

Present suspense as simple riddles and use to illustrate suspense

### The students will:

Recognize and distinguish between the characteristics of narrative and expository stories

Identify the main character, setting, story problem or adventure in the narrative

Understand the basic concept of FIRST, NEXT, LAST

Begin to summarize narrative stories

Distinguish among the five senses

Recognize the ways in which authors use the five senses to describe story critical characters, settings, and objects

Develop an awareness of the thought process of an author in creating descriptive segments and learning the language of story

Recognize facial expressions and body language that express feelings

Recognize and identify suspenseful segments