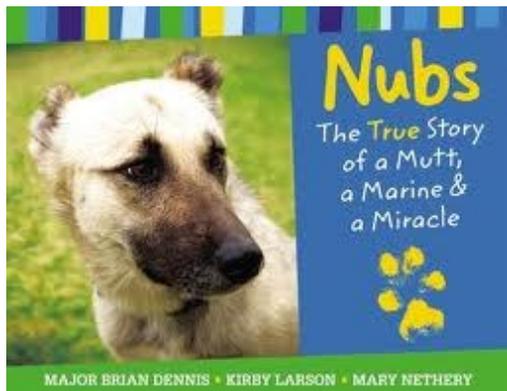


Writing Trait: Organization

Learning Intention: Students will build awareness and learn about complex sentences as they play the, "*Place the Commas Game.*"



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Before Reading:

Learning outcomes:

Before reading Nubs, The True Story of a Mutt, a Marine & a Miracle, have students share dog or pet stories with a partner or in a small group. Stories of family pets or the pets of others, make lovely memoirs. Share some of these memories aloud. As students hear the stories of their classmates, it will trigger connections for those unsure of their pet memory. If some students don't have pets, they may want to talk about some sort of collection they have or their experience with someone else's pet.

Ask students to predict the content of this memoir using the title and cover illustration.

During Reading:

Learning outcomes:

This book begs to be read from beginning to end with limited interruption. But ask students to listen for the flow of language. This text contains many complex sentences that create lovely flow when read aloud.

After Reading and Writing Extensions:

Learning outcomes:

When we simply tell students about simple versus complex sentences, their interest level is often low. All they hear is, "Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." Instead, co-create criteria while playing a "Place the commas" game. The following two pages contains complex sentences from the book.

To play, divide the class into 4 groups of roughly the same size. Teams 1 and 2 will play against each other (or rather, hopefully with each other), and teams 2 and 4 will also be using the same materials and playing against each other. With 4 pages of sentences provided in the next link, the game may be played twice.

The idea is that the sentences from the book will be given to each team, but they will be missing the commas. Students from one team work together to discuss where the commas should go and practice reading each sentence out loud, pausing slightly where commas have been placed. The only clue given is how many commas need to be inserted in each sentence. Teams also need to discuss why they chose the location of their commas within each sentence. As they work with this dilemma, they will be building awareness about complex sentence structure and beginning to co-creating criteria.