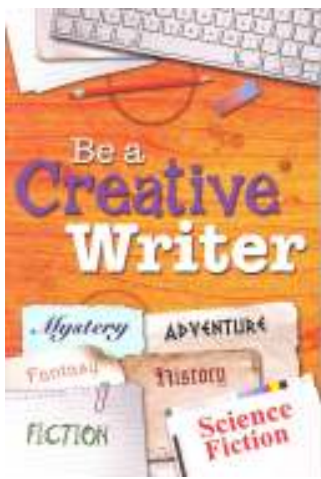


Writing Trait: Ideas and Organization

Learning Intention: use this book during lit circles to foster conversation and further develop ideas about quality writing

S.D. #71



By Tish Farrell

Before Reading

Learning Outcomes: A2, A3, A4, A9, B5,

Show students the images on the following pages by projecting onto a screen or Smartboard. Explain that the ideas presented by this author will be discussed by groups of students—lit circle style. Each group will choose the section of the book they would like to examine. Tish Farrell writing tips will then be shared.

During Reading

Learning Outcomes: B6, B11

This book is available (Fall 2010) at the LRC in 3 sets of 10. To model expectations, use one section or subsection from the book. For this example, a portion of the **Good Beginnings** section is used.

The objective is to gather Farrell's writing tips.

Tips for Good Beginnings

Hook your reader	leap straight into the action
Bizarre Beginnings	use unexpected comparisons
Tense starts	make your opening mysterious, dramatic or tense
Set the Tone	create suspense—dramatic, spooky or humorous
Read Examples	Go to the library and read as many examples as possible.

After Reading

Learning Outcomes: B7, B11, C5

Offer a variety of ways for students to share Tish Farrell's writing tips. Students may want to create a power point slide show to share ideas, act it out, write a rap, make a chart, a movie, or create pictorial representations.

11 Ask questions

Ask questions and then more questions to find your story. What are a young star's problems? Do they worry about their looks and develop an eating disorder? Do they long for a true friend? Do they want a different career? Asking questions will help you see their story take shape.



Case study

Jack Gantos created the *Joey Pigza* trilogy after meeting children with attention deficit disorder (ADD) on his visits to schools. One night he was writing about a particular boy in his diary, and the character of Joey Pigza started coming to life. Gantos was inspired to write a story to show that children whose lives are managed by medication are not bad kids.





7 Great beginnings

Now you have planned your plot and are ready to begin your story. Focus on your hero. Put on your hero's skin. Become your hero. Think about "your" problems. What is at stake? Where will you start the story?

8 Hook your readers

Some stories leap straight into a dramatic scene and then backtrack shortly afterward to explain things to readers. Others start with a prologue, giving the historical context. You could start with a brief scene set just before a crisis comes. This lets you show the hero's usual life right before a conflict makes it worse (the Viking invasions, for example). Your hero must then take action or face the consequences.

9 Bizarre beginnings

In *The Lady and the Squire*, Terry Jones uses some very unexpected comparisons to help us sympathize with his hero, Tom. The writer speaks directly to the reader about the characters.

If you've ever sat astride a man-eating shark and dangled bits of raw flesh in front of it as the creature starts to plunge down into the dark abyss of the sea, taking you with it, you'll have a pretty good idea of how Tom felt in his new job as squire to Henry, Duke of Lancaster. For the time being, Tom was keeping his head above water, but he knew that, at any moment, the duke might eat him for lunch.

Terry Jones, *The Lady and the Squire*





CREATING DIALOGUE

Dialogue lets readers “hear” what your characters have to say in their own words. If it is well written, it brings them to life. Conversations between characters are also a good way to give information that pushes the story forward.

1 The art of eavesdropping

The best way to learn about how people talk is to eavesdrop. But don't simply listen for snippets of gossip. Pay attention to the actual words that are being used. Tune in to conversations over lunch, in the street, or on the bus. Look out for interesting expressions or particular patterns of speech. Watch people's body language, too. What do they do when they're telling someone a secret that they promised to keep?



