Kerpoof Lesson Plan: The Plot Thickens...

Title: The Plot Thickens
Topics: Sequencing, Plot Diagramming, Creative Writing, Language Arts
Materials and Resources: Kerpoof’s Make a Storybook or Make a Movie, Student Vocab/Worksheet, Plot Diagram Worksheet, Additional Resources
Grades: 3-6

Standards (NCTE/IRA):
- 4 Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
- 5 Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
- 6 Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.
- 8 Students use a variety of technological and information resources to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
- 11 Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literary communities.

Vocabulary:
Plot— the order of events in a story. Also called the “storyline.”
Theme— the main idea of a story.
Protagonist— the leading character, hero, or “good guy.”
Antagonist— the adversary of the protagonist.
Conflict— the central problem in a story. There are many different types of conflicts:
  Character vs. Self— the main character has a problem with him/herself, also called “internal conflict.” An example of this would be a character trying to decide what’s right or wrong, like in the movie Aladdin, when Aladdin has to decide whether or not to tell Princess Jasmine the truth about himself.
  Character vs. Character— the main character (“protagonist”) has a problem with another character (“antagonist”). Superhero stories are very good examples of Character vs. Character.
  Character vs. Society— the main character or main group of characters has a problem with social traditions or institutions. A good example is The Giver by Lois Lowry.
  Character vs. Nature— the main character has a problem with nature. Survival stories like “To Build a Fire” by Jack London or Hatchet by Gary Paulsen are examples.
  Character vs. Supernatural— the main character has a problem with supernatural beings like ghosts, monsters, or demons. Ever seen the movie Ghostbusters?
  Character vs. Machine/Technology— the main character has a problem with technological advancements or artificial intelligence. Examples include I, Robot by Isaac Asimov and Frankenstein by Mary Shelley.
**Character vs. Destiny**— the main character has a problem with a predetermined path that has been chosen for her or him. This can also be called “Freewill vs. Fate.” Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* is a classic example.

**Plot Diagram**— a map of a story’s plot, showing exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and dénouement.

**Exposition**— dialogue or description that gives the reader the background of the characters and the present situation.

**Rising Action**— the central part of a story, during which various problems and conflicts arise, leading up to the climax.

**Climax**— the highest point of interest and the turning point of the story. The reader wonders what will happen next... will the conflict be resolved or not?

**Falling Action**— shows the result of the climax, and its effects on the characters. Conflict begins to resolve itself. The reader knows what “happened next.” Critics call a story “anti-climactic” if they feel that the falling action takes away from the power of the climax.

**Dénouement**— This word comes from French and Latin words meaning “to untie” and “knot.” The conflict is resolved, creating normality for the characters and a sense of relief for the reader.

### Instruction:

**Session 1, Classroom instruction**

1. First, ask your students to recall some childhood fairytales. Have them find a partner and take a few minutes to share their favorite tale, along with at least two reasons why they liked it.

2. Ask students to raise their hand if the fairytale they picked was Cinderella. Pass out the Student Worksheet/Vocabulary List, and introduce each of the basic vocabulary words (skip the types of conflict for now) as you draw a plot diagram for Cinderella on the board. When you’re finished, the plot diagram should look something like this:

   **Cinderella**:
   - Lives unhappily with her stepmother and two stepsisters; an invitation to a ball at the palace arrives.
   - The stepsisters prepare to go to the ball; a fairy godmother appears and sends Cinderella, too. She dances with the prince until midnight and runs away, losing her slipper.
   - The prince finds the slipper and vows to marry the woman whom it fits.
   - Cinderella and the prince prepare to marry.

   **Climax**:
   - The prince visits the home of Cinderella. The two stepsisters try to wear the slipper, but Cinderella is revealed to be the owner.

   **Falling Action**:
   - They live happily ever after.
3. Next, introduce your students to the different types of conflict as listed on their Student Worksheet/Vocab List. Point out that although there is usually a primary source of conflict, there can be multiple types of conflict in a story. Ask students to think about all the versions of Cinderella they’ve come across, and all the different types of conflicts represented in the tale. They might say:
   - Character vs. Character — Cinderella frequently clashes with her stepmother and/or stepsisters (the story’s antagonists), who do not want her to go to the ball. In most familiar versions of the tale, this is the primary source of conflict.
   - Character vs. Society — Due to traditions around inheritance and gender, and the type of society she lives in, Cinderella doesn’t have any control over her life or her father’s estate.
   - Character vs. Supernatural — Cinderella must leave the ball by midnight, even though she wants to keep dancing.

4. If your students are in fifth grade or higher, assign a classic short story from the list on the Additional Resources page to read as homework or in class. Map this story together (identifying theme, conflict and protagonist/antagonist), or split your class up into groups of two or three. Optionally, you can address other literary devices like foreshadowing and metaphor as you discuss. If your students are in third or fourth grade, choose a read-aloud book from the list on the Additional Resources page. Read it aloud and map it as a class, identifying primary and secondary sources of conflict, as well as theme and protagonist/antagonist, if applicable.

**Session 2, Computer lab instruction**

1. Time for students to grab their Student Worksheets and head to the computer lab! Have them use Make a Storybook to create their own short work of fiction. Try assigning each student a source of conflict (or let them choose from the list) before they start writing. If you are working on the Writing Process, have your students follow each of these steps:
   - Prewriting
   - Writing
   - Editing
   - Proofreading
   - Publishing

   **OPTIONAL:** Students who are interested in film might opt to use Make a Movie to present their story, instead.

2. After your students have completed their stories, have them either switch computers with a partner or print out and exchange stories. Ask them to read their partner’s story and:
   - identify the primary source of conflict
   - identify protagonist/antagonist
   - identify theme
   - create a plot diagram of the story

   Students can either diagram by hand (worksheet provided) or with Make a Drawing.
The Plot Thickens: Vocabulary

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The Plot Thickens: Student Worksheet

☐ Log on to www.kerpoof.com.

☐ Enter the Make a Storybook activity.

☐ Create your story!

☐ What is the type of conflict you’ll write about? ____________________________

☐ What is the name of your protagonist, if you have one? ____________________

☐ What is the name of your antagonist, if you have one? _____________________

☐ What’s the theme of your story? _______________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

☐ Draw a plot diagram of your story below:

Remember to use proper spelling, punctuation and grammar!

☐ Switch stories with your partner. Remember to:

☐ Draw a plot diagram to hand in.

☐ Identify the protagonist (if there is one): ________________________________

☐ Identify the antagonist (if there is one): _________________________________

☐ Identify the theme: _________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

☐ Identify the type of conflict: _________________________________________
# The Plot Thickens: Additional Resources

More on plot and plot elements:
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plot_%28narrative%29
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exposition_%28literary_technique%29

Short story suggestions (grades 5-up):
“The Ransom of Red Chief” by O. Henry
“The Cask of Amontillado” by Edgar Allan Poe
“The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” by Washington Irving
“Little Lost Robot” by Isaac Asimov
“The Monkey’s Paw” by W. W. Jacobs
“Harrison Bergeron” by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.
“To Build a Fire” by Jack London

Read-aloud suggestions (grades 3-4):

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<th>Author</th>
<th>Publication Date</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>ISBN</th>
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<tr>
<td>The Lorax</td>
<td>Dr. Seuss</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Random House</td>
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<td>The Ugly Duckling</td>
<td>Hans Christian Anderson, Jerry Pinkney</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>HarperCollins</td>
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<td>Bread and Jam for Frances</td>
<td>Russell Hoban</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>HarperCollins</td>
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<td>Ming Lo Moves the Mountain</td>
<td>Arnold Lobel</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Greenwillow Books</td>
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<td>Jumanji</td>
<td>Chris Van Allsburg</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Houghton Mifflin</td>
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<td>Amazing Grace</td>
<td>Mary Hoffman</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Dial</td>
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<td>The Story of Ferdinand</td>
<td>Munro Leaf</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Puffin</td>
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<td>Hey, Al</td>
<td>Arthur Yorinks</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Farrar, Straus and Giroux</td>
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