

Lesson Plan

Alternate Endings

Book: *Making a Raft for the Three Billy Goats Gruff*

Series: Fairy Tale Science

Level: Beacon

Objective

To help students explore how the rule of three shapes the structure of many stories, and to imitate this structure by writing alternate endings for “The Three Billy Goats Gruff.”

Supplies

- *Making a Raft for the Three Billy Goats Gruff* book
- Notebooks and pencils

Before the Activity

Read Chapter 1 (“The Three Billy Goats Gruff”) of *Making a Raft for the Three Billy Goats Gruff* out loud to students.

Activity

“The Three Billy Goats Gruff” is a popular fairy tale. This story is also an example of the rule of three. The rule of three is an idea that helps shape the structure of stories and other writing. Many authors use it. They create stories with patterns of three characters or events. Often, the first two characters or events are similar. But something changes with the third one.

For example, in “The Three Billy Goats Gruff,” there are three goats who want to cross the bridge. The first two goats convince the troll to wait. But the third goat does something different. That goat knocks the troll off the bridge. Use the following questions to explore other examples of the rule of three:

- Can you think of other stories or fairy tales that use a group of three characters or events? (Sample Answers: “The Three Little Pigs,” “Goldilocks and the Three Bears”)
- How is the third event or character in these stories different? (Sample Answers: The third pig’s house stays standing. The third bowl of porridge is just the right temperature for Goldilocks to eat, and the third bear finds Goldilocks asleep in the bed.)

Next, ask students to create their own versions of “The Three Billy Goats Gruff.” Like the original story, this version should feature three goats. But students should think up a new ending for the story. In their notebooks, students can brainstorm other things for the third goat do to, as well as how those actions would change what happened at the story’s end. Then, each

student can pick one idea and write the new version of the story on a separate page. Choose a few volunteers to read their stories out loud to the class.

Evaluation

Could students think of other stories that used the rule of three? Could they identify differences in the third character or event? Did they remember to follow this pattern when writing alternate endings for “The Three Billy Goats Gruff”?

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards’ writing standards, grade 3 (W 3.3).