FOCUS READERS

Lesson Plan

A Story's Form

Book: *Trolls*
Series: Mythical Creatures
Level: Beacon

Objective
To help students practice describing a story's plot (including the ways characters respond to events) and comparing that story with a nonfiction text about a similar topic.

Supplies
- *Trolls* book
- A copy of *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, or a website where you can read the story online, such this one: https://americanliterature.com/childrens-stories/the-three-billy-goats-gruff

Before the Activity
Read the *Trolls* book out loud to students.

Activity
Many stories about trolls come from Norway. One story, *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, is especially famous. Read *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* out loud to students.

Explain that some books and stories organize information chronologically. Their authors describe events in order, starting with what happened first and ending with what happened last. Other books and stories organize information topically. Their authors describe facts in groups. The facts in each group are about the same topic. But they may have happened at different times. Authors choose the best organization for each book or story. Telling events in order helps readers follow a story, so many fiction writers use this form. Telling categories of facts helps readers understand a topic, so many nonfiction writers use this form. However, nonfiction books can also tell events in order.

Ask the following questions to help students compare the organization of the two texts you read out loud:
- Is *Trolls* organized chronologically or topically? (Answer: topically)
- Why do you think the author chose this structure? (Answer: It divides the facts about trolls into categories that are easy for readers to understand.)

- Is *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* organized chronologically or topically? (Answer: chronologically)
- Why do you think the author chose this structure? (Answer: It helps readers know which events in the story happened first.)

In addition to telling events in chronological order, many fiction writers follow a pattern of events in their stories. Use the following prompts to help students take a closer look at how this pattern is used in *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*:
- Who are the four characters in *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*? (Answer: the troll and the three billy goats)
- At the beginning of a story, the characters often want something. What do the goats want? (Answer: They want to cross the bridge to eat grass and get fat.)
- To get what they want, the characters face a problem. What problem do the goats face? (Answer: There is a troll who wants to eat them.)
- This problem causes the story's action to begin. During the action, the characters try different ways to solve the problem. How does the little goat try to solve the problem? (Answer: He convinces the troll to wait for a bigger goat.)
- How does the medium goat try to solve the problem? (Answer: He also convinces the troll to wait for a bigger goat.)
- How does the third goat try to solve the problem? (Answer: He fights the troll.)
- The climax is the point of the story when the problem is biggest or most exciting. Often, the characters have to find a new way to solve the problem. What is the climax in this story? (Answer: when the big goat and the troll fight)
- In the story's resolution, the problem is solved. What is the resolution in this story? (Answer: The big goat wins the fight, and all three goats can eat grass.)

Evaluation
Could students answer the questions about the form of each text? Could they identify the story's characters and answer the questions about its plot?

Standards
This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' reading standards for informational texts, grade 3 (RI 3.3) and reading standards for literature, grade 3 (RL 3.3, 3.5).