

Lesson Plan

Hooking Your Readers

Book: *Deep-Sea Fishing*

Series: The Outdoors

Level: Navigator

Objective

To help students identify the strategies (such as sensory detail and vivid verbs) authors use to create exciting writing and incorporate those strategies into their own writing.

Supplies

- *Deep-Sea Fishing* book
- Whiteboard or chalkboard
- Paper and pencils
- Hooking Your Readers: Peer Critique Sheet (attached)

Before the Activity

Read through the *Deep-Sea Fishing* book, or assign it to students to read on their own. Print a Hooking Your Readers: Peer Critique Sheet for each student.

Activity

When you begin writing, it is important to grab your readers' attention right away. Writers often do this by making specific choices about the words they use. Ask students to brainstorm the kinds of words or descriptions an author might use to get readers' attention. Make a list of their ideas on the whiteboard. The list should include the following items:

- a catchy title
- exciting action
- specific details about the setting
- descriptions of several senses (not only sight)
- vivid verbs
- precise or proper nouns

Today, students will explore how the author of *Deep-Sea Fishing* draws readers in at the book's beginning. Even though most of this book is informative, the author opens the book with a narrative description of a person going fishing.

Choose one student to read the first three paragraphs of Chapter One ("The Thrill of the Catch") out loud, ending with "There will be delicious mahi-mahi on the table tonight" (p. 6).

The other students should be listening for elements of the text that grab readers' attention and make these paragraphs exciting. After the student finishes reading, ask the following questions:

- What details does the author give you about the setting? (Answers: You're on a fishing boat in the Pacific Ocean, the weather is good, etc.)
- What are some vivid verbs the author uses? (Answers: lurches, whines, fight, etc.)
- What are some precise or proper nouns the author uses? (Answers: Pacific Ocean, heavy-duty fishing poles, mahi-mahi, etc.)
- What senses does the author mention or hint at? (Answers: *Whines* describes sound, *delicious* hints at how the fish will taste, and several other sentences describe sight.)

Ask the students to pretend they are authors who have been hired to write a book about deep-sea fishing. Using the information about deep-sea fishing they learned from the book and the information about hooking a reader's attention they learned from the discussion, students should write their own three-paragraph description that will go at the beginning of their book's first chapter.

When the students have finished writing, have each student choose a partner. Give each student a peer critique sheet. Student should read their descriptions out loud to their partners. Their partners will then answer the questions on the peer critique sheet. Encourage students to be thorough, explaining that they will receive points for filling out the sheet well. (Note: Students' grades on their written description will not be affected by their partner's comments.)

At the end of the activity, collect the students' descriptions and peer critique sheets.

Evaluation

Give each student 4 points for filling out the peer critique sheet and up to 10 points for writing the description, using the following rubric:

- writing an exciting title (2 points)
- using vivid verbs (2 points)
- using specific details, including proper or precise nouns (2 points)
- describing senses other than sight (2 points)
- using correct spelling and grammar (2 points)

Standards

This lesson may be used to address the Common Core State Standards' speaking and listening standards, grade 4 (SL 4.1), and writing standards, grade 4 (W 4.3).

Hooking Your Reader: Peer Critique Sheet

Your name _____

Your partner's name _____

1. Did your partner include an exciting title? What made it exciting?

2. Did your partner use vivid verbs? Give at least one example.

3. Did your partner use specific details and precise nouns? Give at least one example.

4. Did your partner mention senses other than sight? Which ones? Give at least one example.