Reading, Writing, and Art Connections for Kindergarten

50 Literature-Based Lessons for Creative Readers and Writers

A Companion Book for Getting Ready to Write
by Kathy Howell
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Introduction

Kindergarten is such an important year in the educational lives of children. In so many ways it lays the groundwork for how to learn and, if done well, can nurture children’s innate curiosity, resulting in a life-long love of learning.

The most successful learning interactions for kindergarten students will engage children’s interest, involve a multi-sensory approach, and stimulate them socially, emotionally, and intellectually. Activities that are hands-on, creative, and tied to literature help children assimilate language development, critical thinking, and foster both small and gross motor development. It also stresses the importance of oral language as the precursor to written language.

The lessons and activities in this book are designed as enriching extensions of the foundational material found in Empowering Writers K-1 Text *Getting Ready to Write*. Using high quality picture books as a jumping off point (both fiction and nonfiction), these art-related writing activities will inspire imagination, help students make connections between related concepts, and establish a strong reading-writing connection. You’ll notice that a wide variety of “springboard” books are listed. The lessons can be easily applied to a variety of texts, making the lessons accessible to everyone. A visit to your school media center or public library will provide you with all of the books you need, and on which these highly stimulating and fun lessons are based.

How to Use this Book

Notice that each lesson plan begins with a lesson number, title, and the prerequisite coordinating lesson in *Getting Ready to Write* listed by page number and name. After completing the prerequisite foundational learning you can move on to the related Reading, Writing, Art Connection lesson and dive in! Each lesson plan includes a clear objective, materials, and step-by-step procedures. These lessons are designed to review, reinforce, and extend the concepts presented in *Getting Ready to Write*, in fun and engaging ways. (Please note that when referencing *Getting Ready to Write* we’ll abbreviate it GRTW.) All Student Pages are available for download from the following link: [http://empoweringwriters.com/grade-k-reading-writing-art-connections-student-pages/](http://empoweringwriters.com/grade-k-reading-writing-art-connections-student-pages/).

It is possible to teach the complex 21st century skills our students need without sacrificing the creative, fun factor. That’s what this companion book is all about!
Objective:

Students will summarize character/problem/solution and personal experience narratives. Students will begin to recognize the SIMPLIFIED WRITING DIAMOND as a representation of the shape narrative stories take, with emphasis on the middle being the largest portion. Students will recognize how authors use alternative words for “go” and “went” to add additional descriptive information.

Materials:

- Character-Problem-Solution/Personal Experience Narrative Summarizing Framework, GRTW p. 44
- Simplified Narrative Writing Diamond, GRTW p. 37
- Caterpillar Pattern pieces p. 31 *Note to teacher – create several patterns for the students to trace using heavy card stock or poster board
- Food items eaten by the caterpillar p. 32
- A variety of colors of construction paper
- Small pieces of white construction paper
- Chenille stems or pipe cleaners for the caterpillar’s antennas (one for each child)
- Sentence Strips, accordion folded into eight sections
- Glue, tape, scissors
- Book Suggestions:
  * The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle, (Philomel Books, 1994)
  * Caterpillars to Butterflies by Deborah Heiligman, (HarperCollins, 1996) Expository
  * Caterpillar to Butterfly by Laura Marsh, (National Geographic, 2012) Expository
  * Caterpillars, Bugs and Butterflies by Mel Boring, (Cooper Square Publishing, 1999) Expository

Procedure:

1.) Begin the lesson by reviewing the Beginning, Middle, End summarizing framework used with narrative stories. Compare this framework to the Character, Problem, Solution/Personal Experience Framework (GRTW p. 44). Point out that this framework is very similar to the Beginning, Middle, End Framework used in previous lessons and now they will move to the Character, Problem, Solution/Personal Experience Framework.

2.) Read the book, The Very Hungry Caterpillar. When finished, ask: “Boys and girls, who was the main character in this story?” the caterpillar “Yes, the caterpillar. Did he have a problem?” yes, he was hungry “What happened to the caterpillar because he was hungry?” he ate too much food “Yes he ate too much food. What happened when he ate so much?” he got a stomachache “So how did he solve this problem of a stomachache?” he ate through a leaf and then he felt better “Was that the end of the story?” no, he built a cocoon around himself and later hatched into a beautiful butterfly
Use the information gathered from the students to fill in the narrative summarizing framework. Display the
Summarizing Framework template (GRTW p. 44) (use the poster if available or digital technology)

This story is about ____ a hungry caterpillar _____.
The problem/experience/adventure was that ____ the caterpillar ate too much food and suffered a stomach ache ____. The problem was solved/experience concluded when ____ the caterpillar ate through a leaf and felt better ____. 

ON ANOTHER DAY:

3.) Display the SIMPLIFIED WRITING DIAMOND (GRTW p. 37). Point out that the middle of the story (the place where the main character struggles with a problem or has an adventure or significant experience) is the LARGEST, most important part of the story. Explain that in the middle of the story, authors stretch out the event. Ask: “In the middle of The Very Hungry Caterpillar, what was the problem?” He ate too much food. Open the book and point out the middle of the book where the caterpillar is eating the food. Show how the author spends more time in this portion with the caterpillar eating so much food. Reference this technique as “stretching out the middle.”

4.) To demonstrate this idea, have the students create a “stretched out” caterpillar depicting each of the food items the caterpillar ate on separate days, comparing the “stretched out” caterpillar to the “stretched out” middle of the book. Distribute caterpillar pattern pieces, p. 31 to small groups of students (head, tail and eyes). Give each child an accordion folded sentence strip, one chenille stem, one colored sheet of construction paper and one small sheet of white construction paper.

   a. Students will trace and cut out one head and one tail pattern on colored construction paper. These two colored pieces will be glued to the front and back of the accordion folded strip, the head glued directly on the front square and the tail glued directly on the back square. See diagram on p. 31.

   b. The next step involves tracing and cutting out two small eyes from white construction paper and gluing them onto the top portion of the caterpillar’s head.

   c. Fold the chenille stem in half and curl the edges to resemble the caterpillar’s antennas. Tape (you might want to staple as well) the folded stem to the very top of the head. Use a black marker to fill in the pupils of the eyes.

   d. The finished caterpillar should have a head, six accordion folded blank sections and a tail. See finished sample p. 30.

   e. Now it is time to show how the author stretched out the middle of the story. Give each child a copy of the food items the caterpillar ate p. 32, or the sentence starters to complete. Depending on the developmental stage of your students, have them, cut out and glue the food items (in order) onto the six sections or let them write the items in each six sections beginning with “On Monday he ate ______. On Tuesday he ate ________.” And so on.
Sentence Starters:
On Monday he ate ________________.
On Tuesday he ate ________________.
On Wednesday he ate ________________.
On Thursday he ate ________________.
On Friday he ate ________________.
On Saturday he ate ________________.

Optional: Share an Expository side by side book during this unit. See the suggested titles in the materials list.
Caterpillar Diagram and Patterns

Teacher: Trace and cut these on heavy card stock or poster paper for students to use as a pattern in creating the stretched-out caterpillar.

Diagram:
Food from *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*
Objective:
Students will begin to recognize how authors write their opinions and summarize a simple opinion piece, noting the reasons why the author holds the opinion. They listen to opinions and summarize what they heard.

Materials:
• Perfect Pajamas, p. 51
• Opinion Summarizing Framework, p. 52
• Book suggestions:
  * Pajama Day! by Robert Munsch, (Scholastic, 2013)
  * Pajama Day by Lynn Plourde, (Puffin, 2007)
  * The Practically Perfect Pajamas by Erik Brooks, (Winslow Press, 2000)
  * Polly’s Pink Pajamas by Vivian French, (Candlewick, 2010)
  * Pigs in Pajamas by Maggie Smith, (Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2012)

Procedure:
1.) Read a book about pajamas such as Pajama Day! by Robert Munsch or The Practically Perfect Pajamas by Erik Brooks.
2.) After reading a book about pajamas, ask the students to tell about their favorite pajamas and why they are so special.
3.) Ask the students to imagine that they were buying brand new pajamas. Distribute a copy of Perfect Pajamas p. 51 to each student. Read them an advertisement about each of the pajamas on the page. See if they can figure out which pair of perfect pajamas the advertisement is describing.

Read the following advertisement:
If you want the perfect pair of pajamas, you must buy these footed pajamas adorned with shiny yellow moons and a sparkly star. The soft flannel fabric is cozy and warm for sleeping. Both of your feet will be covered so your toes are as warm as your tummy. Try snuggling up to watch television or read a book wearing these cosmic PJ’s. They will definitely become your favorite!

4.) Ask the children to point to the pajamas in the advertisement. See if they can recall the reasons they would be a favorite pair.
Expressing Opinions

5.) Copy or project the *Summarizing Framework, p. 52* and have the students prompt you in filling in the summary about the first pair of pajamas.

**MODELED Sample:**

This piece expresses an opinion about **footed pajamas**.

The author likes these pajamas because **they are covered in moons and stars**.

Another reason is because **they are made of soft flannel**.

**ON ANOTHER DAY:**

6.) Repeat the procedure from the point of view of another advertiser. Read the following: *Are you looking for your favorite pair of pajamas? You should not go to sleep tonight without slipping on our “sweet treat” PJ’s. The two-pieced set is covered in delicious cupcakes lathered in frosting and topped with all sorts of deliciousness, from sprinkles to cherries. The silky top and matching pants are perfect for cuddling with your favorite nighttime book or furry friend. Buy this set and you will sleep tight dreaming of your favorite dessert.*

7.) Again, ask the children to point to the pair of pajamas in this advertisement. See if they can recall the reasons why these PJ’s are perfect. Then summarize the paragraph about the second pair of pajamas.

**MODELED Sample:**

This piece expresses an opinion about **two-pieced pajamas**.

The author likes these pajamas because **they are made of silky fabric**.

Another reason is because **they are covered in delicious cupcakes**.

**Optional:**

Have the children draw their favorite pair of pajamas and write a reason why they are the perfect PJ’s. Provide sentence starters and scribe for students that need help.

**Sentence starters:**

My favorite pair of pajamas are my __________ because______.

I love my ___________ pajamas because ______________.

I always sleep in my ___________ pajamas because __________.
Perfect Pajamas
Summarizing Framework - Opinion

This piece expresses an opinion about _____.

The author likes these pajamas because _____.

Another reason is because _____.
Tallying Opinions

Objective:
Students will learn ways to verbalize opinions about things they like or dislike, approve or disapprove of.

Materials:
• Cookie Favorites Drawing Template, p. 60
• Cookie Favorites Writing Template, p. 61
• Book suggestions:
  * If you Give a Mouse a Cookie by Laura Joffe Numeroff, (HarperCollins, 2010)
  * Cookie Count by Robert Sabuda, (Little Simon, 1997)
  * Franklin and the Cookies by Sharon Jennings, (Kids Can Press, 2005)

Procedure:
1.) Read a book about cookies such as If You Give a Mouse a Cookie by Laura Numeroff and ask the students what type of cookie mouse is eating in the story. (chocolate chip) Then ask them what their favorite type of cookie is. Oreo, Nutter Butter, sugar cookie, chocolate chip, oatmeal raisin, Snickerdoodle, etc. Once they have shared their favorite cookies, list two, maybe three of their favorites on the board and draw columned lines between the choices (see sample below). Then say: “If we had to choose between these cookies, which would be your favorite.

   Optional: Incorporate the “Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down” Cards (GRTW p. 57).

2.) Turn this into a math lesson by tallying the number of students choosing each cookie and placing the equal number of tally marks under their choice.

3.) Next, ask the students why each of these cookies is their favorite. Then, below the tally marks, write the reasons the students like the specific cookies as their favorite.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Chocolate Chip</th>
<th>Oreo</th>
<th>Snickerdoodle</th>
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<tr>
<td>melted chocolate</td>
<td>eating the middle</td>
<td>cinnamon taste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taste</td>
<td>outside layers</td>
<td>soft middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good in a glass of milk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ON ANOTHER DAY:

4) Distribute a copy of the **Cookie Favorites Drawing template p. 60** for each student and have them color (and decorate) their cookie according to which one is their favorite. Distribute a copy **Cookie Favorites Writing template p. 61**, one for each child, and have them write the reason why the cookie is their favorite. Provide sentence starters for students to fill in the blank, especially if they are in the beginning writing stages. The teacher may have to scribe for some students if they are unable to write the words.

**MODELED Sample:**

*My favorite cookie is a chocolate chip cookie because when they are warm, the chocolate is melted and good.*

*I really like Snickerdoodle cookies because they are very soft and chewy in the middle.*

**Sentence Starters:**

I really like ________ because ___________.

My favorite cookie is ____________ because ________.

I enjoy eating a ______________ cookie because __________.
Cookie Favorites Drawing
Cookie Favorites Writing
Yes! I like chocolate chip cookies because they are yummy when they are hot out of the oven. The chocolate is soft and delicious.
Objective:
Students draw a **diagram** of some aspect of a topic (person, place or thing) and label the important parts.

Materials:
- Butterfly Wing Pattern, p. 101
- Butterfly Labeling Diagram, p. 102
- Expository/Narrative book suggestions:
  * **Waiting for Wings** by Lois Ehlert, (Scholastic, 2002)
  * **Ten for Me** by Barbara Mariconda, (Arbordale Publishing)
  * **National Geographic: Caterpillar to Butterfly** by Laura Marsh, (National Geographic Children’s Books, 2012)
  * **From Caterpillar to Butterfly** by Deborah Heiligman, (HarperCollins, 1996)
  * **A Butterfly is Patient** by Dianna Hutts and Sylvia Long, (Chronicle Books, 2011)

Procedure:
1. Have an informational discussion about what they already know about butterflies.
2. Read an expository book about butterflies (use a book from the suggested list or choose a favorite from your classroom). As you read the informational text about butterflies, read slowly, pointing out print conventions, photos, captions, and diagrams.
3. Ask students, “What is this book about?” **butterflies**
4. Next ask, “Why do you think the author wrote this? Was it to entertain us or to give us information?”
   On the board write:
   ```
   This piece gives information about ________ butterflies_____.
   Author’s Purpose: _______ to inform _______.
   ```
   Fill in the blanks using information about the book read (sample shown above).
5. Explain that one way a reader learns about a topic is through special pictures or **diagrams**. A diagram is a clear, simple drawing that uses words to label the important parts. Draw a quick diagram of a butterfly and MODEL how you would label the parts. Point out each of the parts and have the students read the label. A sample labeled butterfly is available on p. 102. Use as a drawing pattern or distribute copies to the students.

On Another Day:
6. Revisit the lesson from the previous day – reviewing the book. Refer to the diagram and the labeled butterfly.
   Then, explain that they will have the opportunity to create their own butterfly and label the parts.
7. There are many artistic ways to create butterflies. Art materials such as duct tape, craft sticks, paint, crayons,
pom pom balls, clothespins, foam paper, dot stickers and pipe cleaners can be used in a variety of ways to design very creative butterflies. Even dried seeds can be adhered to a butterfly cut-out to pattern a very uncommon butterfly. A wing pattern is included with this lesson, p. 101. The pattern is intended to be traced onto folded paper and cut along the traced lines. Here are a few ideas to choose from (or use your own):

- A very unique butterfly can be created by melting crayon shavings between a folded sheet of paper. When the paper cools, trace a butterfly wing pattern onto the folded paper and cut along the edges. A clothespin can be used as the head, abdomen, and thorax. Pipe cleaners make great antennas as well. (Use butterfly wing pattern p. 101)

- Another creative way is to use small pieces of tissue paper, glued onto a wing-shaped pattern. Clothespins can be used here also, or students can draw and cut out their own from construction paper. (Use butterfly wing pattern p. 101)

- Coffee filters dabbed with watercolors or markers make unique butterfly wings. Once the color is added, scrunch the coffee filters up to represent the butterfly’s wings. Add clothespins and pipe cleaners for the body and antennas.

- Students’ hand prints cut from different colors of construction paper create fun fore-wings and hind wings. Or stamp the student’s hand prints in a variety of colors onto white paper and let students cut around each hand print. Pom pom balls can be glued in the center to represent the head, thorax and abdomen.

8) As students finish their designs, they can label the butterflies in a variety of ways. Keep the MODELED sample posted for the students to use as a reference. Circulate and assist them when necessary.

- Adhere the butterflies to a paper-backed bulletin board and have the students label the parts on the paper.
- Create a mobile effect by adhering several small strings to the completed butterflies and attaching labels to the other end of the string.
- Attach small pieces of tape (the kind that can be written on) to the back of the butterfly and label the parts.
- Label the front of the butterfly using a Sharpie Marker.

Additional Applications/Opportunities:

1.) Read a narrative story about butterflies. Point out character, setting, problem, solution, beginning, middle, end.

2.) Informative Sentences – GRTW pp. 121-125: Write informative sentences about the butterflies. Display several sentence starters to help with vocabulary and sentence variety. (See sample informative sentence starters GRTW p. 123.)

3.) Feelings – GRTW p. 198: Have the students pantomime and write their feelings about their butterfly art project.

4.) No Go Words – GRTW p. 249: Think of ways the butterfly moves–this is a great way to teach the children new vocabulary – example: fly, flutter, soar, drift, flicker, flit, ripple, ruffle, wiggle, vibrate. Add these movement verbs to the no-go cards. Have students pantomime moving to these words.

Make It Your Own –Use your creative ideas to design your own writing lessons with a butterfly theme and share them!
Butterfly Wing Pattern
Butterfly Labeling Diagram

- Wing
- Antenna
- Head
- Thorax
- Abdomen
Objective:
Students will identify story critical characters, settings, and objects in narrative stories.

Materials:
- Story Critical Character/Setting/Object Template, GRTW p. 139
- The Secret Life of Squirrels Template, p. 134
- Stuffed squirrel or realistic photo of a squirrel
- Various items brought from home by the students
- Camera
- Book suggestions:
  * The Secret Life of SQUIRRELS by Nancy Rose (Little, Brown and Company, 2014) Narrative
  * Welcome to the World of Squirrels by Diane Swanson (Whitecap Books, 2001)
  * Squirrels (Backyard Animals) by Lauren Diemer (Weigl Pub Inc., 2007)
  * Squirrels! Look and Learn by Becky Wolff (Amazon Digital Services, Inc.)

Procedure:
1.) Begin the lesson by previewing the book, The Secret Life of Squirrels by Nancy Rose. Have students take a look at the cover and the title of the book making predictions about the genre and author’s purpose. Ask: “Do you think the squirrel has a problem?” yes “Why do you believe this to be true?” his secret life
2.) Read the story to the children. They will discover that the story is a character/problem/solution narrative about a lonely squirrel. Guide students in filling out the narrative summarizing framework:
   This story is about ________ Mr. Peanuts ________.
   The problem/adventure/experience was that ________ Mr. Peanuts was lonely living by himself ________.
   The problem was solved/experience concluded when ________ his cousin, Squirrel, comes to visit ________.
3.) Introduce the students to who (character), where (setting), and what (object). Ask: “Who is the story critical character in this story?” Mr. Peanuts “Where does the story take place?” In and around the squirrel’s home “What is the story critical object in the story?” Students will probably list several at this point. Help students to realize that the story is full of objects, but the letter is the critical object that helps Mr. Peanuts to solve his problem.
4.) Fill in the Character/Setting/Object template (GRTW p. 139).
ON ANOTHER DAY:

5.) Revisit the book, The Secret Life of Squirrels. Ask the students to recall some of the objects that were important to Mr. Peanuts. Chart their responses:

- tiny grill
- washer and dryer
- rug
- rubber duck
- wagon
- tent
- piano
- tiny bed
- bookshelf
- small bathtub
- chess game
- ice cream cone
- books
- vacuum cleaner
- rocking chair
- mirror
- picnic table
- cake

6.) MODEL a few sample sentences using the character, Mr. Peanuts, the setting, and one of the objects.

MODELED Samples:

- Mr. Peanuts slept inside his tiny tent at the campground.
- Mr. Peanuts vacuumed the small rug in his living room.
- Mrs. Peanuts mailed his letter at the mailbox.

7.) Have the students color-code the three critical elements in each sentence. Red for character, blue for setting, and green for objects.

8.) Introduce the students to your stuffed toy squirrel, Mr. Peanuts (or if you don’t have one, show them a realistic picture of a squirrel you named Mr. Peanuts). Explain to students that you are going to give them a homework assignment. They are to bring something from home for Mr. Peanuts. Encourage them to bring small objects about the size or smaller than the toy squirrel or the squirrel depicted in the picture. Give some examples such as a crayon, very small stuffed toy, small ball, small doll pieces, small food items (nothing that might spoil), tiny piece of paper and small pencil, or anything of appropriate size for the squirrel.
ON YET ANOTHER DAY:

9.) When the students bring their items, take a picture of the squirrel with the item. Some pictures might need to be taken outdoors, some at the desk, some on the floor, etc. Print these out.


11.) Let the students use their photo of the squirrel and their specific item to draw a picture in each of the sections. Optional: create a tri-fold.

12.) Next, let the students create a sentence or story about the squirrel with the item. MODEL an example for students to use as a guide. (The teacher can bring an item to photograph with the squirrel.) Color code the sentence.

   MODELED Sample:
   
   Mr. Peanuts enjoyed painting a picture in our classroom with his new paints.
   
   (Mr. Peanuts: red / in our classroom: blue / new paints: green)

13.) Guide the process by circulating, helping those that need assistance. Some may need a scribe to write their sample.

   *Note: Share an Expository side by side book with this lesson. Some suggested titles are in the Materials list.
The Secret Life of Squirrels

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<th>WHAT</th>
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12.) Now, have the students write a description of their bear/animal. Be sure to display the Sentence Starters. (The teacher may choose to MODEL another description of a different stuffed animal before giving the students an opportunity to write, depending on the level and understanding of the class.) For those students that are not developmentally ready to write on their own, the teacher can scribe their piece, using ideas suggested by the student.

**Sentence Starters:**
- My bear/animal is the size of ______________.
- The soft creature ____________.
- Looking closely, I noticed ____________.
- I was surprised it wore ______________.
- The gentle ______________ felt ____________.

**ON YET ANOTHER DAY:**

13.) Next, create a large forest to display in the room or hallway. From a roll of large bulletin board paper, cut a sizable length as the backdrop for the forest. Have each child sponge paint a large brown strip (tree trunk) on the paper, from the top of the paper to the bottom. (Using washable paint and sponges attached to a clothespin will minimize the messiness of this activity.) Give each child a turn, and when all of the tree trunks are painted, it will resemble a forest. Let the tree trunks dry. Follow the same painting technique for the tree leaves, stamping green sponge paint along the top of the tree trunks. When this activity is complete, the forest should be similar to the forest in the book, *Where's my Teddy?*

14.) Attach the forest to a bulletin board or display the completed woods in the hallway.

15.) Let each student pick a place in the forest to adhere their stuffed teddy bear/animal photo. Near each photo, display the written description of the child's bear/animal. Title the display, *Where's My Teddy?*

**More Ideas with Teddy Bear/Woods Theme:**

1.) **MODEL** and write a description of the woods. Use the same **MODELING** techniques and share detail-generating questions and sentence starters with students.

2.) Choose a variety of landscapes to display with the photos of the stuffed animals. After reading *Corduroy* by Don Freeman, create a department store. Let the students create and add different items in the store such as the shelf Corduroy was found on, the elevator, the turned over lamp, the mattress he pulled the button from, etc.

3.) Read the book, *Lost* by David McPhail and create a cityscape to display the photos in. Cut the skyscrapers from a single color of bulletin board paper (black for nighttime, gray/yellow for daytime) and adhere the photos to the display.
Can you believe my teddy bear got lost in the woods. His soft brown fur was two colors of brown. His paws were dark brown spots on the bottom of his feet.
Objective:
Students will recognize redundant vocabulary. They will participate in creating a chart of word referents with teacher direction. Students will participate in teacher-directed modeling of a suspenseful segment. Students will write a riddle describing their subject.

Materials:
- Whose Tail is This? Template, p. 176
- Book suggestions:
  * Whose Tail is This? by Kris Hirschmann, (Flying Frog, 2013)
  * Whose Tail is This?: A Look at Tails, Swishing, Wiggling and Rattling by Peg Hall, (Picture Window Books, 2002)
  * What Do You Do with a Tail Like This? by Steve Jenkins, (HMH Books for Young Readers, 2008)
  * Whose Nose is This? by Peg Hall, (Picture Window Books, 2002)
  * Whose Skin (Mouth) is This? both books by Lisa M. Kee, (Picture Window Books, 2002)
  * Whose Eyes (Ears, Legs, Feet) Are These all by Peg Hall, (Picture Window Books, 2002)
  * Whose Tail (Nose) Is This? both by Wayne Lynch, (Whitecap Books, 2010)

Procedure:
1.) Read a book about animal tails such as Whose Tail Is This? by Kris Hirschmann, Whose Tail Is This? by Peg Hall or a book from your school/classroom library. As you share the book, cover up the animal except for the tail before reading each page and see if students can guess which animal the tail belongs to.

2.) Gather a collection of animal photos, depicting distinctive tails (children's magazines, free online photos, expository books about animals, and science textbooks all have great animal photos). Before presenting the photo of an animal to the children, draw a simple illustration of the tail (tail only in the drawing) on the board. Write one or two sentences describing the animal and his tail alongside the drawing. For example, write: This animal’s tail is very hairy. Sometimes its owner can brush the tail or even braid it. This distinctive mammal swishes his tail from side to side, often slapping its rider. Whose tail is this? Using the descriptive sentences on the board and the drawing of the tail, let the children guess the animal in your photo. a horse Once they have chosen the correct animal, reveal the photo of the animal. Point out to students that you kept them in suspense. Emphasize that this technique is used by authors to keep readers interested in a book. Share several more examples!

3.) Project a copy of Whose Tail Is This? Template, p. 176. Explain that they are going to be asked to draw a sketch of the animal’s tail on the folded section, a description of the animal on the writing lines, and a picture
of the animal on the inside frame. In other words, they are going to create a suspenseful riddle. Call attention to
the words, Who has... and tell them this will be their beginning sentence starter. Remind the children that in a
suspenseful riddle, you don’t want to reveal the answer, thus they will not mention the name of their animal in
the written portion.

4.) Next, MODEL a descriptive segment about an animal and his tail similar to the shared examples from earlier.
Have a child choose a photo from your collection and sketch the tail on the board. Together, using detail-
generating questions to expand their thought process, MODEL sentences about the animal and his tail. Provide
sentence starters to extend vocabulary and create variety in their writing.

Detail-Generating Questions:
How big is the animal?
What kind of tail does the animal have?
What kind of eyes, ears, teeth, paws, claws does the animal have?
What color is the animal?
Where does the animal live?
How does the animal move?

MODELED Sample: based on a skunk (simple) and elephant (more elaborative)

Who has a white stripe down his back and smells really bad?

Who has a long trunk and lives in the zoo? This mammal has large feet and gray wrinkled skin. Would you
believe they spray water on themselves with their trunk?

5.) Distribute a copy of Whose Tail is This? Template, p. 176, one for each student. Tell them it is their turn to
write a suspenseful riddle. Demonstrate how to fold the paper, lining up the right edge even with the lined
section. Instruct students to choose an animal, draw its tail on the small folded section and write a description
of the animal on the writing lines. Be sure to remind them not to give away the animal’s name in the written
segment. Then, on the inside, they will draw their animal. Display the charted questions and sentence starters
for those wanting to write more than one sentence.

Sentence Starters:
Who has __________?
The animal is ________________.
This mammal has ____________.
Would you believe that ________________.
I am surprised that this creature ________.

Extension:
Extend this lesson by having students research their animal, searching for fun facts about their chosen creature.
Encourage them to refer to their animal with word referents to heighten the suspense.

More Suspenseful Riddle Ideas:
• Create a different suspenseful riddle activity using the theme of community helpers. There are many similar
books entitled Who Tools Are These?, Whose Hat (Vehicle) Is This? by Sharon Katz Cooper. The same
writing template could be used with a name change, Whose Tools, Hat, or Vehicle is this?
Whose Tail is this?

Who has a scaly tail and lives in water?

Who has a long neck?

Whose Tail Is This?

fish

Who has a long neck?