Analyze the Features of a Realistic Fiction Story

1. Focus

Explain Genre Features

Say: Every writing genre has certain features or characteristics. For example, when you read a personal narrative, you expect that it will be written in the first person. You also expect that it will describe a personal experience the writer has had. Those are features of a personal narrative. When you read a biography, you expect that the author of the book will tell you when and where the subject was born and something about the subject’s childhood. Those are features of a biography. Realistic fiction stories also have some typical features, and today we’re going to identify and analyze those features.

Build a Class Genre Features Anchor Chart

Say: I want you to think about what you already know about realistic fiction stories. Think of the stories we have read together and that you have read by yourself. Let’s build an anchor chart to summarize the features, or characteristics, we would expect to find in any realistic fiction story.

Display a blank chart like the one shown here on chart paper or use the interactive whiteboard resources. Also, distribute copies of the chart on BLM 1 to students. Work with students to record features of realistic fiction stories in the left-hand column. (The right-hand column will be completed in the next part of the lesson.) If necessary, use the following prompts to guide students:

- What kinds of narrators can a realistic fiction story have?
- What kind of characters does a realistic fiction story have?
- What kind of setting does a realistic fiction story have?
- What else do realistic fiction stories have?

Sample Realistic Fiction Features anchor Chart (BLM 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Realistic Fiction Features</th>
<th>Examples from the Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Third person point of view using he or she, or first person point of view using I</td>
<td>Narrator is the author. She uses he, she, and they throughout the story. page 14: “She and the other kids from the Oak St. Apts. always walked home together.” page 15: “She also took care of the kids after school. They were a little afraid of her because she was so grumpy and strict.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characters are like people you know or might meet</td>
<td>page 16: “Jamal doing laundry? The kids had to see this. They trooped down to the basement.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story takes place in a realistic setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least one character has a conflict</td>
<td>page 17: Brooke warns Jamal that Ms. Tilly won’t allow him to keep such a big dog. pages 18–19: It is hard to clean such a big, dirty, active dog.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

- Identify features of the realistic fiction genre to create a class anchor chart.
- Listen to an interactive realistic fiction read aloud and find the features of the genre in the narrative.

Preparation

Materials Needed

- Mentor text: “Jamal’s Secret”
- Chart paper and markers
- Realistic Fiction Features (BLM 1)
- Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation

If necessary, copy the sentence frames from “Strategies to Support ELS” on chart paper.
Read Aloud a Realistic Fiction Story

Before you read, point out the right-hand column on your chart and on students’ BLMs. Explain that you are going to read aloud (or reread) a realistic fiction story and that, as students listen, they should look for examples of the genre features in the story. Explain that, after reading, students will work together in small groups to complete the chart. They will write down examples of each genre feature. Read aloud (or reread) “Jamal’s Secret.” You may wish to project the text using the interactive whiteboard resources so that students can follow along.

2. Rehearse

Analyze the Mentor Text

Divide students into small groups to complete the second column of the graphic organizer on BLM 1. If you are using the interactive whiteboard resources, invite students to revisit parts of the text at the whiteboard as they look for the examples they need.

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

Share Ideas

Bring students together and invite volunteers to share the examples they found in “Jamal’s Secret.” Record their findings on the anchor chart. Post this anchor chart for students to refer to throughout the unit as they think about the features of realistic fiction that they need to include in their stories.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: As you write your own realistic stories, remember that most realistic fiction has certain features that readers of this genre expect to see, such as realistic characters and setting and a conflict that the characters need to solve. You can refer to our anchor chart to help you remember these features.

Encourage students to think about the features of a realistic fiction story as they draft their stories. During student conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to read aloud from their realistic fiction stories. Discuss how students include the features of a realistic fiction story.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Pair beginning ELs with fluent English speakers during the small-group activity. Keep in mind that they will not be able to contribute many ideas orally. You will want to work with them individually to reinforce concepts while other students write independently.

Intermediate

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers to complete BLM 1. Write the following simple sentence frames on chart paper and model how students can use them to contribute ideas in the group. For example:

One example of realistic characters is ______.
One example of a realistic setting is ______.
The point of view is ______.
The conflict is ______.

Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers during the partner practice.

All Levels

If you have students whose first language is Spanish, share this English/Spanish cognate to help them understand the lesson focus: narrator/el narrador/la narradora.