Analyze the Features of a Historical Fiction Story

1. Focus

Explain Genre Features

*Say:* Every genre has certain features that readers can expect to find. If you read a memoir, you expect a narrative in which the writer recounts his or her feelings about important experiences. As a reader of historical fiction, you can expect to find certain features in any historical fiction story. Today we’re going to identify and analyze features of the historical fiction genre.

Build a Class Genre Features Anchor Chart

*Say:* Think of what you already know about historical fiction. 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 we would expect to find.

Display a blank chart like the one shown here on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Also distribute copies of the chart to students on BLM 1. Work with students to record features of historical fiction stories in the left column. (Students will complete the right column later in the lesson.) If necessary, use the following prompts to guide students:

- What kind of setting does a historical fiction story have?
- What kinds of characters would you expect to find in a historical fiction story?
- What kind of events would occur?
- What do you think must be true about the dialogue?
- Which points of view could you use to tell a historical fiction story?
- What kinds of conflicts would you expect to find?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historical Fiction Features</th>
<th>Examples from the Text</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authentic historical setting</td>
<td>page 18: “her brother’s sleeping mat,” “a water skin”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>page 19: “lush oasis . . . bare sand and rock. The pyramid . . .”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Characters who lived or could have lived in the setting</td>
<td>page 19: the names Mery and Khaba sound authentically Egyptian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Events that occurred or could have occurred at the time the story is set</td>
<td>page 19: “He was in love with a girl named Neferet, who refused . . . because he was poor. Khaba had been fretting about how he could get a cow or a bit of copper.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dialogue that sounds realistic for the setting and characters</td>
<td>page 23: “. . . when they got caught,” Khaba said. “You mean when the curse . . .,” Mery corrected.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Story told through third person or first person point of view</td>
<td>page 22: “She had forgotten how superstitious Khaba was.” “Next they made their way down . . .”</td>
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<tr>
<td>At least one character who deals with a conflict of self</td>
<td>page 20: “Khaba you can’t rob the pharaoh’s tomb.” “Watch me.” “If you’re caught . . . you’ll be executed.”</td>
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Sample Historical Fiction Features Anchor Chart (BLM 1)
Read Aloud a Historical 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 historical fiction story and that students should listen for examples of the genre features. Explain that, after reading, students will work together in small groups to complete the chart. Read aloud (or reread) “Tomb Robbers! A Story of Ancient Egypt.” You may wish to use the interactive whiteboard resources to display the text so that students can follow along.

2. Rehearse

Analyze the Mentor Text

Divide students into small groups to complete the second column on BLM 1. If you are using 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 the text. Record their findings on your anchor chart. Post this anchor chart for students to refer to throughout the unit.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: As you independently write your own historical fiction story, keep in mind that most historical fiction includes the features of this genre that we have discussed. Consult our classroom anchor chart to help you remember them.

Encourage students to think about the features of a historical fiction story as they brainstorm and plan their stories.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite two or three students who have selected their story ideas to talk about how they plan to incorporate specific features of historical fiction genre.

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 during the small-group activity. Write the following simple sentence frames on chart paper and model how students can use them to contribute ideas in the group. For example:

_Historical fiction has _______.
Characters in historical fiction are _______.
The setting in historical fiction is _______.

Advanced

Ensure that ELs work with fluent English speakers during the small-group activity.

All Levels

If you have students whose first language is Spanish, share the following English/Spanish cognates to help them understand the lesson focus: character/el carácter; conflict/el conflicto; dialogue/el diálogo.