Analyze the Features of a Realistic Fiction Story

1. Focus

Explain Genre Features

Say: Every kind of writing has certain features, or parts. For example, if you read a recipe, you expect that the recipe will list the ingredients you need and the steps you must take to make the dish. Those are features of a recipe. When you read a persuasive letter, you expect that the writer will use powerful words to say why his or her idea is a good one, and that the letter will be addressed to somebody. Those are features of a persuasive letter. Realistic fiction stories also share some features, and today we’re going to learn and talk about 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 list the features, or parts, that we would expect to find in any realistic fiction story.

Display a blank chart like the one shown here on chart paper or using 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 column. (Students will complete the right column later.) 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 happens to characters in a realistic fiction story?

Mentor Text

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 story read aloud and find the features of the genre in the narrative.

Preparation

Materials Needed
• Mentor text: “Tia’s Bad Day”
• Chart paper and markers
• Realistic Fiction Features (BLM 1)
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation
If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, you may wish to copy the sample sentence frames provided in “Strategies to Support ELs” on chart paper to help students talk about the mentor text.

Realistic Fiction Features | Examples from the Text
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Third person point of view using he or she or first person point of view using I | “Tia’s Bad Day” is told from the third person point of view. page 14: “Tia knew that it was going to be a bad day. First she overslept.”
Setting is like the world we live in | page 16: “Back at the apartments, the kids opened their backpacks.”
At least one character faces a problem, or conflict | page 17: Luke wants to stop playing because he is hungry. Tia wants to keep playing.
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) “Tia’s Bad Day.” 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 “Tia’s Bad Day.” 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 they need to include in their realistic fiction stories.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: As you write your story, remember that most realistic fiction has certain features that people expect to see. These features include realistic settings and characters and a conflict that the characters try to solve. Use our classroom anchor chart to help you remember these features when you write your own realistic fiction story.

Invite students to continue brainstorming story ideas. You may also wish to have them focus on a specific feature of realistic fiction by writing a paragraph describing a character who could be part of a realistic story.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share their ideas for realistic fiction stories. Ask them to tell about their characters and settings.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Pair beginning ELs with fluent English speakers during the “Analyze the Mentor Text” 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. Model a way for ELs to contribute to the group by displaying the following simple sentence frames on chart paper:

A realistic fiction story has ______.
The characters in a realistic fiction story are ______.
A realistic fiction story has a setting that ______.

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 this English/Spanish cognate to help them understand the lesson focus: story/la historia.