Organize Ideas with a Story Planning Chart

1. Focus

Explain the Process

Say: We brainstormed ideas for a realistic story and then we decided on which ideas to use in our writing. Now we need to organize our story ideas before we begin our drafts. We need to think about where our story takes place. We need to think about what our story problem will be and then what events lead to the solution. This will make it easier when we begin writing our drafts. A story planning chart can help us do this. Today I’m going to show you how to use a story planning chart to help you organize your ideas before you begin your drafts.

Model Organizing Ideas with a Story Planning Chart

Display the story planning chart on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Use some, or all, of the sample think-alouds below based on “The Writing on the Wall.” (Note: If you haven’t read aloud this mentor text, you may wish to do so now.)

Sample Story Planning Chart (BLM 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting (time and place): Where does the story happen?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In a cave at the beach during summer vacation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the problem?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girl and her mother have planned special day at the beach, but her friend wants her to come with him to see something amazing. She’s torn between spending time with her mother and spending time with a friend.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Middle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Events:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Girl thinks about what to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Thinks maybe she can go and still get back in time to spend time with mom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Goes with friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Friend shows her picture of girl on wall of cave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Girl realizes friend is tricking her and it’s his drawing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Girl doesn’t get mad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>End</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How does the story end?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl goes back to her mom, apologizes, and they enjoy their day at the beach.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample think-alouds. Say: I’m going to use the mentor text “The Writing on the Wall” to model how to expand on ideas for a realistic fiction story. I’ll imagine I’m the writer of this story and I’ll jot down ideas for the beginning, middle, and end the way the writer of that story might have done before she began to draft.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

• Learn how to use a story planning chart to organize ideas for a realistic fiction story.
• Practice organizing their own ideas for a realistic fiction story on a story planning chart.
• Discuss how to apply the strategy to their independent writing.

Preparation

Materials Needed

• Mentor text: “The Writing on the Wall”
• Chart paper and markers
• Story Planning Chart (BLM 4)
• Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation

If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the planning chart onto chart paper.
Beginning. Say: The setting for my story will be during summer vacation at a beach. The story problem will be that the main character, who’s a girl, has promised to spend the morning at the beach with her mom. But a friend wants her to go with him. Now she doesn’t know what to do. Model writing on the chart.

Middle. Say: The events that happen in the middle of my story will lead to the solution to the problem. I could have the girl go with her friend. He shows her a drawing on a cave wall. Her friend likes to play tricks, so she realizes that he’s done the drawing and it’s not ancient. I could have her get mad at him. No, I think I’ll have her laugh about it. She tells him to rework his drawing so he can trick someone else. Model writing on the chart.

End. Say: I still have to solve my story problem. I’ll have the girl go back to her mom. She can apologize and the two of them can spend the whole day together. Model jotting down your ideas on the chart.

2. Rehearse

Practice Organizing Ideas with a Story Planning Chart

Invite students to use the story planning chart to begin to organize their ideas for their realistic fiction stories. Students will not have time to complete their organization during the mini-lesson, but they can continue during independent writing time. 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 ideas they organized on the chart. Discuss how having a plan helps them draft a better story.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Invite beginning ELs to draw pictures for the beginning, the middle, and the end of their stories. Encourage them to talk about their drawings using words and/or gestures. Expand on their ideas and help them write captions for their pictures.

Intermediate and Advanced

Encourage ELs to use the following sentence frames to help them talk about their story ideas:

- **My story problem is______**.
- **My setting is______**.
- **One thing that happens in the middle is______**.
- **At the end,______**.

All Levels

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share this English/Spanish cognate: *problem/el problema*.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We just learned that we can use a story planning chart to organize our stories before we begin drafting them. We can think about what will happen in the beginning, middle, and end. When we have a plan, we can write a better story.

Make BLM 4 available to students who are ready to organize ideas for their realistic fiction stories during independent writing time. During conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring the class together. Invite volunteers to share some of the events on their planning charts. Ask them how using the planning chart is helping them organize their story ideas.