Use Your Research to Organize Ideas on a Story Map

1. Focus

Explain the Process

Say: You’ve brainstormed, narrowed your focus, and gathered lots of useful information during your research. Before you draft, you need to use your research to organize your ideas. One way to organize ideas for historical fiction is to use a story map so you have a kind of road map as you write. Today I will show you how to use research information to organize your ideas on a story map.

Model Organizing Ideas

Display a Historical Fiction Story Map like the one shown on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting Background:</th>
<th>wooded area; winter 1625; people came to America for a second chance at a new life; there were no other white people; there were Native American tribes who didn’t bother the colonists</th>
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| Characters:         | 1. Father: strong; quiet; determined to make this new life work; knows a lot about living off the land, but not everything; doesn’t want to admit limitations  
                                    2. Mother: sweet-tempered; takes good care of her family  
                                    3. two boys: 12 years old and 9 years old |
| Problem:            | Pride; Father wants to prove he doesn’t need help; builds home a few miles away from the other colonists; family gets caught in a blizzard |
| Events:             | 1. Father tells his wife they are trapped by the blizzard.  
                                    2. Mother realizes their food supply is very low. Do they have enough to last?  
                                    3. They finish their food on second day of blizzard.  
                                    4. Father decides he must go hunting.  
                                    5. Father is gone for several hours; Mother is worried, knowing the dangers of being caught in a blizzard. |
| Solution:           | A Wampanoag Indian finds Father in the woods almost frozen to death and brings him home. Father admits his pride and moves his family to the colony. |

Sample Historical Fiction Story Map (BLM 6)

Add information to the Historical Fiction Story Map as you think aloud about organizing your research.

Setting Background. Say: My research told me that in the early 1600s, people came to America for many different reasons. One reason was to have a second chance at a new life. There were Native American tribes living in villages in what is now New England, but there were no white people there when the ships landed. I also learned that they arrived in spring or early summer so they would have time to prepare for winter. I’ll have my story take place in a wooded area in the winter of 1625, after homes have been built.
**Character**. **Say**: I’ll have my story be about a family of four. There will be two boys, ages 9 and 12. The father is strong, quiet, and very determined. My research told me that many people came thinking they could conquer the land. I’ll use this information with the father. I’ll say that he knows a lot about living off the land and doesn’t accept his limitations. The mother is a sweet-tempered woman who takes good care of her family.

**Problem. Say**: My research told me that pride was a problem faced by many early colonists. They wanted to prove that they did not need help. Pride will be one of the father’s character traits, and this pride places his family in danger. He builds his cabin a few miles away from the other colonists. The problem will be that the family is caught by a blizzard as their food is running out.

**Events. Say**: Now I need to add events. I think my first event should be the father coming inside and telling his wife that they are trapped by a blizzard. Continue thinking aloud about events and writing notes.

**Solution. Say**: My solution is based on Father’s pride issue. I’m going to have Father return home... but in an unusual way. A Wampanoag Indian finds Father in the woods almost frozen to death and brings him home. Father realizes he can’t do everything by himself.

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**2. Rehearse**

**Practice Organizing Ideas**

Invite students to use information learned during research to organize their ideas for a historical fiction story using BLM 6. 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. Discuss how writers use research information to organize ideas.

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**3. Independent Writing and Conferring**

**Say**: We just learned that after we research our historical fiction stories, we need to organize our research. We are not ready to write until we think through how our story will unfold. How will we introduce the problem? What series of events will develop the problem? And how will we solve the problem? Remember to organize your ideas before you start writing your story.

Make BLM 6 available to students who are ready to organize ideas for their own historical fiction stories during independent writing time. During conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

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**4. Share**

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share details from their Story Maps. Encourage students to discuss areas where they are encountering difficulties.

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**Strategies to Support ELs**

**Beginning**

Invite beginning ELs to storyboard the events in their historical fiction story. Encourage students to tell you about their drawings. Expand on their language and write simple sentences on self-stick notes for each drawing. Read them with students.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Meet with students as needed before they complete their graphic organizers. Invite them to orally rehearse what they will write. Support their use of the academic language on the story frame.