

How Does the Story Begin...or End? Grades 2-4



Every day has starting and ending points. What time does school begin? What time is soccer practice over? The opening and closing of a story is just as important!

Supplies Needed:
Dry Erase Markers
Tissues or Tissue paper

Directions:

Why do stories need good beginnings and endings? Good beginnings get readers' attention. Strong introductions hook and lead readers into the story. Good conclusions leave readers feeling satisfied. Most writers figure out their beginnings and endings when they outline their stories.

Students read a few story beginnings such as those from "Charlotte's Web" by E.B. White or "Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day" by Judith Viorst. Consider fairytales, traditional ethnic stories, and various types of literature to broaden the possibilities.

Students should write a beginning sentence to their own imaginative story on a white board with a Crayola Dry-Erase Marker. Read the openings aloud to each other. Which ones capture the most attention? Which ones could lead to an interesting story? With a bit of editing, how could they be improved? List the beginnings that have the most potential on a two-column chart on a large white board. (The second column is for endings.)

Now, write some story endings (they don't have to match the beginnings). A good ending ties all the threads of the story together, ends any conflict in the plot, and completes the telling of the tale. Students go back to their favorite book and read the ending. Why was it satisfying? Was it exciting?

Add the most compelling story-ending lines to the chart. Include types of endings such as statements that summarize the story, predictions of what could still happen, and reflections about events that took place in the story.

Use the beginnings and endings for round-robin oral story-telling in small groups.