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Putting Books to Work: Laura Numeroff's IF YOU GIVE A DOG A DONUT

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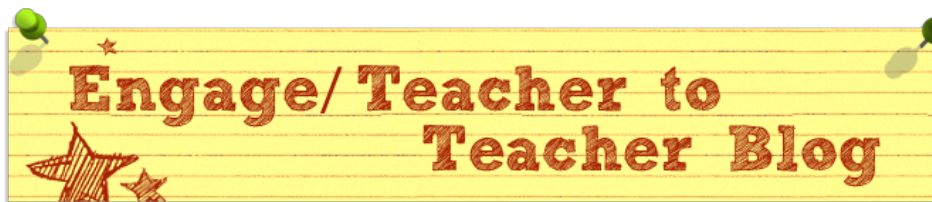
Story Sequencing Using Laura Numeroff's IF YOU GIVE A DOG A DONUT
By Susan Kaye Jennings

IF YOU GIVE A DOG A DONUT by Laura Numeroff (Balzer + Bray, 2011)
Pre-K through Third Grade

IF YOU GIVE A DOG A DONUT is a charming repetitive story about a boy and his dog. The repetitive sequencing in Laura Numeroff's text invites readers to enjoy the antics the dog gets into as he asks for apple juice, dresses like a pirate, and flies a homemade kite! This is a fascinating story that will delight young readers as well serve as a great teaching tool.

All of Laura Numeroff's stories promote repetitive reading and sequencing skills for children of all ages, and can be used for a variety of purposes in the classroom. I would recommend this book, as well as any of her IF YOU GIVE books, to teach the concept of story sequencing to young children.

Cross-curricular Connections: language arts, visual arts, writing, digital literacy

Ideas for Classroom Use:

Story Sequencing

The purpose of this activity is to focus on the students using visual images from the story to aid in their comprehension of story sequencing (story grammar, story structure).

Begin by asking students to make their own illustrations (draw their own version of the illustrations/events to make event cards—you could laminate these so that they can be used again). Then, group students into sets of three to four and ask them to put the pictures in story order.

An extension to this activity would be to use other books that Numeroff has written and have each group work with a different set of pictures, then have the groups rotate so that they get to work with each set (of course, they would need to be books that the students have been introduced to before). The teacher can also place a copy of the book with the set of pictures so that the students can read through the story first and then sequence and provide a check for completion of the activity.

Comic Strip Sequencing (Second to Fourth Grade)

The purpose of this activity is for students to create their own version of the events that transpired during the story and place them in a comic strip format.

To complete this activity, the teacher will assign a book to a group of students (two to four); the students will then read through the story (reading aloud so that all can hear)
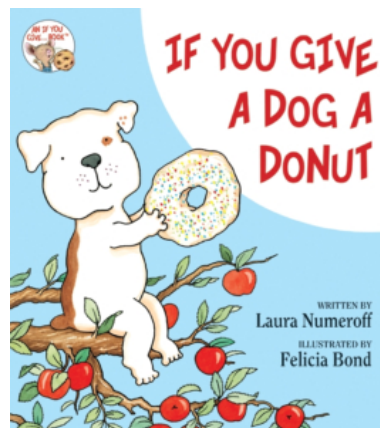
four), the students will then read through the story (reading aloud so that all can hear) and write the events in order that they take place on a sheet of notebook paper.

When they've finished, the students will each choose one or two events from the story to create comic strip panes. Ideally, each student would be responsible for one pane, but depending on the number of events in the story, they may need to complete more than one. The illustrations that they create should match the events that took place within the book without actually tracing or copying the actual illustrations within the book (as this should be their own interpretation of the events).

Second, the group will create a retelling of the story that will be used when they record their comic strip. This retelling should contain the events that are within their comic panes; however, they can also include other information such as descriptive words, actions, verbs, and so on.

Once complete, the students will use a hand-held video recorder to create a "moving" comic strip. Recording will need to be done slowly, actually freezing over each pane as the retelling is taking place (this may require practice beforehand). As one student is recording the comic pane by pane, the other retells the story, thus creating a video.

To conclude this activity, each group can present their video to the class using a computer and projection screen.

Events Chart (Hands-on)

The purpose of this activity is for the students to sequence the events of a Laura Numeroff story.

First, rebus pictures (photos/images) of characters, setting, and events can be displayed on a sentence strip chart (holder). Within each line there will be a sentence strip with a fill in the blank sentence:

- This story is about a (dog) and a (boy).
- The first event that took place was that the (dog) wanted (apple juice).
- The second event that took place was that the (dog) wanted [fill in the blank until the book is finished]

An extension to this activity involves the teacher using Popsicle sticks and gluing images of the characters, settings, and events of the story to the top of them (one baggy of these for each student). Pass these out to the students as

they are sitting in the reading corner preparing for the activity. As the teacher is reading the pre-made sentences on the chart, the students will choose the correct Popsicle stick with the appropriate image and hold it up. Continue until all sentences have been read.

Beginning-Middle-End Trifold

The purpose of this activity is for the students to identify what took place in the beginning of the story, middle of the story, and end of the story.

Students will take a piece of paper (regular, construction, or cardstock) and fold it like a trifold brochure (in thirds). In the first column, have the students write the word "beginning" at the top, in the middle column have them write the word "middle," and on the last third have the students write the word "end." The students will then draw pictures of the events that took place at each of these points in the book, incorporating visualization skills.

An extension to the activity would be for the students to provide a short written description—no longer than a five- to seven-sentence paragraph to match each drawing—that could be placed on the back of the picture.

For struggling readers, or those with disabilities, try providing various photos of the items within the story (i.e., real photographs, clip art, or hand-drawn images) and have them cut and paste them into the appropriate column.

Additional Resources:

Integrating Language Arts: IF YOU GIVE A MOUSE A COOKIE
This ReadWriteThink lesson plan combines story sequencing, making predictions, and word work. While it focuses on the first book in Numeroff's IF YOU GIVE series, it can be used for any of those titles (including IF YOU GIVE A DOG A DONUT).

Author Laura Joffe Numeroff was Born in 1953
This Calendar Event from ReadWriteThink offers activities that use Numeroff's circular plot structure to examine cause and effect.

Engaging With Cause-and-Effect Relationships through Creating Comic Strips
This lesson plan, designed for students in grades 2 through 4, also looks at cause and effect, but in the context of creating comic strips.

Comic Creator
A popular student interactive from ReadWriteThink, the Comic Creator also includes a printable PDF planning sheet perfect for some of the activities outlined above.

5 Questions With... Laura Numeroff
This recent interview on the Engage/Teacher to Teacher blog focuses more on Numeroff's Jellybeans series, but it's a great read for any fan of the prolific author/illustrator.

Susan Kaye Jennings *is a graduate assistant at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas. Previously, she taught self-contained life skills to students in (K-5) for nine and a half years. at the same elementary school she went to as a child. Her passions include teaching reading to children with special needs, working with teachers to determine effective instructional methods/strategies, using reading assessment to drive instruction in the classroom, and using children's literature in the classroom.*

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