

# REVERSE STORYTELLING

*Lesson Plan for High School, English/Language Arts*

*Prepared by WEM Staff*

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Esherick had early success as an artist creating woodcut illustrations for books. When working on his first book, *Rhymes of Early Jungle Folk* (Marcy, 1922), Esherick and writer Mary Marcy often exchanged poems and woodblock illustrations. At times, she would provide him with a poem and he would create an illustration. Other times, he would give her an illustration and she would create a poem. In the spirit of their collaboration, the present lesson seeks to spark students' creativity at home by asking them to write a creative work based on a work of art.

Note, this plan is intended for use in a virtual learning environment. Though communication with the entire class via video chat is ideal, this plan can be adapted to fit any form of text communication. Moreover, it is easily adapted back to your regular classroom environment once you return!

## EDUCATION STANDARDS

1. Standard - CC.1.4.9-10.B  
Write with a sharp distinct focus identifying topic, task, and audience.
2. Standard - CC.1.4.9-10.M  
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events.
3. Standard - CC.1.4.9-10.Q  
Write with an awareness of the stylistic aspects of writing. • Use parallel structure. • Use various types of phrases and clauses to convey meaning and add variety and interest.
4. Standard - CC.1.4.9-10.T  
Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

## OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to recognize elements of creative writing and apply same to their own original work.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. Internet ready computers.
2. A list of artwork for inspiration. [Find ours here.](#)
3. Paper and pens/pencils (or word processing software), for drafting.

## VOCABULARY

Action- Collectively describes anything that happens in a story.

Allusion- A reference to another work, person, event, etc. For instance, “Don’t be such a Scrooge!” alludes to *A Christmas Carol* (Dickens, 1843).

Conflict- An obstacle to a character’s goals.

Foreshadowing- A literary device which hints at events later in the story. For example, in *The Great Gatsby* (Fitzgerald, 1925), the character Nick says, “We drove on toward death through the cooling twilight.” This foreshadows Myrtle’s death by hit-and-run.

Genre- Refers to a type of story. Drama, fantasy, and science fiction are all examples of genre.

Metaphor- A literary device used to communicate similarities between people, things, ideas, etc. For example, in the famous play, *As You Like It* (Shakespeare, 1599), the character Jacques speaks the famous line, “All the world’s a stage.” This is a metaphor comparing the world (or everyday life and people) to a staged show.

Plot- A term that refers to the collective sequence of events that make up the story. Note, plot may be differentiated from story (especially in film). In that case, plot refers to the events a viewer sees while story refers to all events, seen and unseen. In these instances, plot is a subsection of the larger story.

Theme- Refers to the idea/s that are critical to a story. “Good versus evil” and “coming of age” are both examples of themes.

## ACTIVITY

### *Introduction*

Review elements of language and storytelling (See, Vocabulary). Present an example from the attached list, such as *The Reptiles* (1922) from *Rhymes of Early Jungle Folk* (Marcy, 1922), and discuss the above described collaboration between Marcy and Esherick, in which poems would serve as inspiration for illustrations and vice versa.

Distribute said list of selected artwork and introduce the task at hand. As a warm up, invite students to share ideas for poems, stories, songs, etc. based on your example.

### *Developmental Activities*

Students should review the list and contemplate each piece carefully. They will select at least one piece from which to develop an original creative written work (a story, poem, song, etc.) which integrates the above elements of language and story.

### *Closure*

Regroup for closing discussion. Students should be prepared to describe their work and explain their rationale for their selection of artwork. If time allows, consider giving students the option to share their finished work.

## ASSESSMENT

Submitted written products should reflect a strong understanding of elements of story and language. They should clearly apply to the selected corresponding artwork. All written works should be presented in a creative way. Students should be prepared to share a rationale which clearly explains their reasoning for selecting subject art.

## DIFFERENTIATION OPTIONS FOR DIVERSE LEARNERS

### *Advanced Learners*

As these learners are likely already familiar with the basic elements of language and story, you can take this opportunity to further explore these ideas. Perhaps you will challenge students to more deeply explore the connection between art and literature by encouraging them to seek out a more diverse selection of art from varying eras to supplement their creative works. Consider encouraging advanced learners to self-assess their performance and their experience in creating their project.

### *Learners with Special Needs*

For these students, consider applying more structure to developmental activities. Apply more explicit instruction on prewriting strategies like brainstorming, freewriting, and planning. Ensure students are familiar with the structures associated with various types of writing. Provide monitoring and ample feedback throughout the process.

### *English Language Learners (“ELLs”)*

Make translations or software for same available to ELLs, as needed. For Entering and Emerging ELLs, you may wish to try our [“fill in the blank” story](#), or construct your own in which students can complete with simple nouns, verbs, or even vocabulary words! Expanding and Bridging ELLs will likely be able to write a simple paragraph-long story themselves. Consider challenging them to use specific vocabulary words!