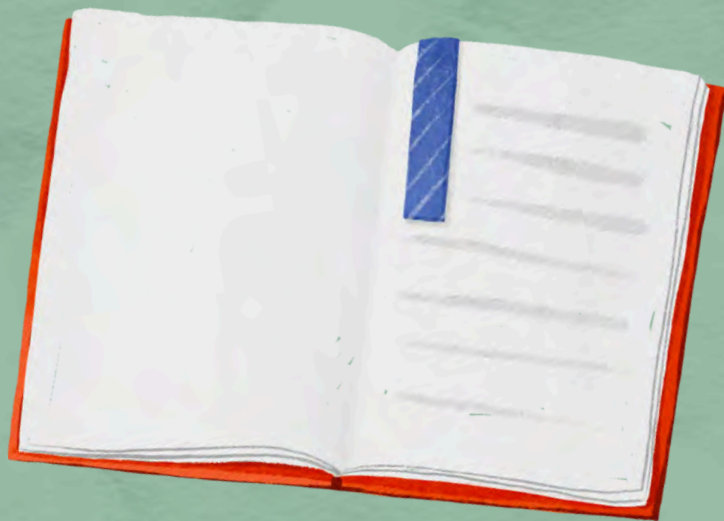




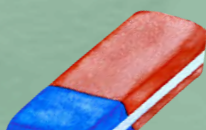
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# ***Simple*** Creative Writing Lessons



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## Character Creation with the Character-Plot Organizer: A Picture Book Lesson Guide

**Featured Book:** Works with Any Narrative-Based Picture Book

**Primary Subject:** Reading/Language Arts & Creative Writing

**Grade Level Range:** K-5 (with adaptations)

**Estimated Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials Needed:** - Mentor picture book (e.g., *We Love Fishing!* by Ariel Bernstein & Marc Rosenthal) - Chart paper and markers - Character-Plot Organizer Template (or blank paper) - Writing and drawing tools (pencils, crayons) - Optional: Vocabulary support cards (traits, goals, obstacles)

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### SECTION 1: QUICK OVERVIEW

#### What This Activity Does:

This activity introduces students to story structure through a simplified version of a professional writing tool: the Character-Plot Organizer. Students imagine a character, define traits, assign a goal, and identify a problem or obstacle—the core ingredients of narrative storytelling. The activity helps build writing confidence and character development skills in a playful, low-stakes format.

**Learning Objectives:** - Students will generate and describe an original fictional character. - Students will identify the character's goal and obstacle. - Students will use drawing and/or writing to complete a visual story planning tool.

**At-a-Glance Standards:** - **Reading:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.3 (Describe characters and how their actions contribute to events.) - **Writing:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.3 (Write narratives that recount two or more sequenced events.) - **Speaking & Listening:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.4 (Describe people, places, things with relevant details.) - Develops 21st Century Skills: Creativity, communication, planning, empathy

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### SECTION 2: STEP-BY-STEP IMPLEMENTATION

**Pre-Reading Preparation** 1. **Set Up Your Space:** Project or print the Character-Plot Organizer. Display modeled examples on chart paper. 2. **Preview the Book:** Choose a picture book with a clearly motivated character. Read in advance to identify the character's goal and challenges. 3. **Gather Materials:** Collect drawing and writing tools, printed organizers (or blank paper), and trait/goal/obstacle word banks for support. 4. **Prepare Students:** Activate prior knowledge by asking: "What makes a character interesting? What do they want, and what gets in their way?"

**During Reading Activities** 1. **Opening Hook:** Ask, "What does your favorite character from a book or movie want more than anything?" 2. **Interactive Reading:** As you read, pause to ask: "What does this character want?" "What's getting in their way?" 3. **Student Participation:** Students turn and talk or draw a quick sketch of the character's goal and obstacle. 4. **Comprehension Checks:** Chart student observations and relate them to the elements of the Character-Plot Organizer.

**Post-Reading Extension** 1. **Core Activity: Complete the Organizer** - Step 1: Model your own example on chart paper. (e.g., "Slippery Dog wants to run a race but always slides on turns.") - Step 2: Guide students to

create their own characters and fill in the organizer with name, traits, goal, and obstacle. 2. **Wrap-Up Discussion:** Have students share their characters in pairs or whole group. Ask: "What challenge will your character face? How might they solve it?" 3. **Assessment Opportunities:** Collect organizers to check for all four elements. Use peer feedback and class sharing as formative checks.

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### SECTION 3: COMMON CORE STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

**Primary Standards Addressed:** - **Reading:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.3 (Describe characters and how their actions contribute to events.) - **Writing:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.3 (Write narratives using sequenced events.) - **Speaking & Listening:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.4 (Describe familiar people or events with details.)

**Cross-Curricular Connections:** - Visual Arts: Drawing characters and settings - SEL: Understanding motivations, emotions, and obstacles

**Evidence of Mastery:** - Completed organizer with clear character, traits, goal, and obstacle - Oral sharing with relevant story elements - Participation in reflective discussion

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### SECTION 4: DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

**For English Language Learners (ELLs):** - Use visual vocabulary cards for traits, goals, and obstacles - Provide sentence starters ("My character wants... because...") - Encourage shared or paired storytelling

**For Students with Special Needs:** - Offer a simplified organizer with icons - Allow drawing responses instead of written ones - Use assistive tech or voice-to-text tools

**For Advanced Learners:** - Ask for multiple obstacles or include a story twist - Have students write a short story based on their organizer - Encourage them to include dialogue or a resolution

**For Struggling Readers:** - Pre-teach key vocabulary and model each step visually - Work with a partner or in a small teacher-led group - Focus only on the character and goal if needed

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### SECTION 5: LEVELING GUIDE

**Scaling Down for Younger Students (K-2)** - Use fewer prompts (name + goal) - Encourage drawing over writing - Simplify with pre-made character cards to choose from - Use group modeling for the whole class

**Scaling Up for Older Students (3-5)** - Require two or more traits and layered obstacles - Have students write a full paragraph or story excerpt - Encourage peer feedback and revision - Introduce plot arcs (beginning, middle, end)

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## SECTION 6: EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

**Same-Day Extensions:** - Draw the character's obstacle and how they might overcome it - Act out a scene with a partner using the created characters

**Week-Long Extensions:** - Write a story based on the character-plot organizer - Create a "classroom storybook" of all students' characters

**Cross-Curricular Extensions:** - Art: Design a "character trading card" - SEL: Write about a real-life challenge they overcame (connect with goal/obstacle) - Social Studies: Link to historical figures with goals and obstacles

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## SECTION 7: PARENT INVOLVEMENT & HOME SUPPORT

**Take-Home Information:** - Share the lesson overview and purpose in a newsletter or handout - Include the vocabulary list (traits, goals, obstacles) to discuss at home

**Home Extension Activities:** - Create a new character together as a family and draw them - Share a story where a family member had a goal and faced a challenge - Check out a favorite picture book and identify the character's obstacle together

**Communication Tools:** - Parent email template explaining the activity - Take-home reflection sheet: "Meet My Character!"

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## SECTION 8: ASSESSMENT & DOCUMENTATION

**Formative Assessment Ideas:** - Check organizer completion during the activity - Use thumbs up/down or color cards for understanding checkpoints - Student sharing circles to explain character ideas

**Summative Assessment Options:** - Rubric assessing character clarity, logical goal, and matching obstacle - Collect and display organizers as part of writing portfolios - Optional short narrative or comic strip

**Documentation Tools:** - Photos of students presenting characters - Teacher notes or checklists from group share - Annotated samples for student-led conferences

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## SECTION 9: TROUBLESHOOTING & TIPS

**Common Challenges:** - Students may choose goals that are too vague or abstract - Some students may rush through without connecting the character to an obstacle

**Adam's Pro Tips:** - Model a ridiculous example first to break the ice ("Cheese Boy wants to stay cool but always melts!") - Prompt: "What's standing in your character's way?" - Encourage collaboration—partners spark better ideas

**Resource Alternatives:** - Use digital drawing or story mapping tools if available - Create laminated character cards for centers - Sub any goal-driven picture book for the read-aloud

# Character-Plot Organizer

Use this template to create a unique character for your story. Fill in each section with your ideas.

## Character Name

## Character Traits

## What Does the Character Want?

## What Gets in the Way?

## Optional: Draw Your Character Below!

## Mastering the Magic of Three: A Rule of Three Writing Lesson Guide

**Featured Book:** Works with Any Narrative or Realistic Fiction Text Featuring Repetition

**Primary Subject:** Reading/Language Arts & Creative Writing

**Grade Level Range:** K-5 (with adaptations)

**Estimated Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials Needed:** - Mentor texts (books with rule of three structure) - Chart paper and markers - Writing paper or journals - Drawing materials (crayons, pencils) - Optional: Story strip templates or graphic organizers

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### SECTION 1: QUICK OVERVIEW

#### What This Activity Does:

This lesson uses the classic storytelling technique of the Rule of Three to help students write with rhythm, build tension, and shape satisfying narratives. Students explore the "fail twice, succeed on the third" pattern through mentor texts and then write or draw their own three-part stories. It encourages perseverance, creative problem-solving, and better sequencing.

**Learning Objectives:** - Students will identify and analyze the pattern of three in stories. - Students will create an original story or scene that follows a three-part sequence. - Students will revise for clarity, event order, and emotional impact.

**At-a-Glance Standards:** - **Writing:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.3 (Write narratives that recount sequenced events with details and closure.) - **Reading:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.5 (Recognize story structure.) - **Speaking & Listening:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.4 (Tell a story with appropriate facts and descriptive details.) - Develops 21st Century Skills: Pattern recognition, narrative pacing, and resilience

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### SECTION 2: STEP-BY-STEP IMPLEMENTATION

**Pre-Reading Preparation** 1. **Set Up Your Space:** Create a visual anchor chart showing "First Try... Second Try... Third Try = Success!" 2. **Preview the Book:** Select a mentor text that models the Rule of Three structure (e.g., *The Three Little Pigs*, *Goldilocks*, or a real-world example like a biography segment). 3. **Gather Materials:** Prepare paper, drawing tools, and templates with three labeled boxes or paragraph prompts. 4. **Prepare Students:** Ask, "Have you ever tried something three times before getting it right?" Lead a quick brainstorm and chart their answers.

**During Reading Activities** 1. **Opening Hook:** Share a quick oral story from your own life about a "third time's the charm" moment. 2. **Interactive Reading:** As you read the mentor text, pause after each attempt and ask, "What happened this time? Did it work?" 3. **Student Participation:** Invite students to predict what might happen on the third try and why this pattern feels satisfying. 4. **Comprehension Checks:** Use questions like, "What would happen if the story stopped after the second try?" or "How does the third attempt change the story?"

**Post-Reading Extension 1. Core Activity: Write a Three-Part Story** - Step 1: Model a story aloud using three failed attempts followed by a win. (Ex: "I tried to bake cookies. First time: forgot sugar. Second time: burnt them. Third time: delicious!") - Step 2: Students write their own version using words, drawings, or both: two failed attempts, followed by a success. 2. **Wrap-Up Discussion:** Ask: "What made your third attempt work? How did it feel to finally succeed?" 3. **Assessment Opportunities:** Students share their stories with partners and check that all three events and a closing sentence are present.

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### SECTION 3: COMMON CORE STANDARDS ALIGNMENT

**Primary Standards Addressed:** - **Writing:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.3 (Narratives with sequenced events, details, and closure.) - **Reading:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.5 (Understanding story structure and purpose.) - **Speaking & Listening:** CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.4 (Presenting clearly with details and order.)

**Cross-Curricular Connections:** - SEL: Perseverance and growth mindset - Visual Arts: Sequencing through comic or storyboard formats

**Evidence of Mastery:** - Clear beginning, middle, and end following the "three tries" structure - Peer assessment with a story checklist - Participation in discussion and reflection

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### SECTION 4: DIFFERENTIATION STRATEGIES

**For English Language Learners (ELLs):** - Provide sentence stems ("First I tried... Then I... Finally...") - Use illustrated vocabulary cards for action words and emotions - Allow oral storytelling before writing

**For Students with Special Needs:** - Use story strips or picture sequencing cards - Allow drawing-only responses or labeled comics - Provide one-on-one scaffolding as needed

**For Advanced Learners:** - Include cause-and-effect transitions between events - Expand into a full paragraph with rich detail and dialogue - Challenge them to break the pattern: two successes then a twist ending

**For Struggling Writers:** - Use a fill-in-the-blank worksheet or comic template - Focus only on identifying three events without full narrative - Pair with a peer for idea development

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### SECTION 5: LEVELING GUIDE

**Scaling Down for Younger Students (K-2)** - Use oral storytelling with visual props - Draw three scenes and label them with single words - Use a shared class story to model the structure

**Scaling Up for Older Students (3-5)** - Require full paragraph writing or typed stories - Include inner thoughts or reactions for each failed attempt - Use digital storytelling tools to narrate the sequence

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## SECTION 6: EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

**Same-Day Extensions:** - Create a "Three-Part Comics" panel - Write a class story where everyone adds one event

**Week-Long Extensions:** - Publish a classroom anthology of "third time's the charm" stories - Compare folktales that use the Rule of Three across cultures

**Cross-Curricular Extensions:** - Math: Create a graph of class results from three trials of a task - Science: Try a simple experiment with three variations (e.g., which paper airplane flies best?) - PE: Track improvement across three attempts at a physical challenge

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## SECTION 7: PARENT INVOLVEMENT & HOME SUPPORT

**Take-Home Information:** - Provide a one-pager explaining the Rule of Three and its use in writing and everyday life - Share examples from student work

**Home Extension Activities:** - Ask families to talk about a "third time's the charm" experience and create a drawing or story about it - Keep a family journal of "three-part wins" over the week

**Communication Tools:** - Sample email or newsletter blurb explaining the lesson - Story planning worksheet for at-home use - Parent reflection form: "Here's how we used the Rule of Three"

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## SECTION 8: ASSESSMENT & DOCUMENTATION

**Formative Assessment Ideas:** - Story checklist: 3 attempts + conclusion - Peer or teacher conferencing - Self-evaluation rubric (smiley face scale)

**Summative Assessment Options:** - Use a rubric aligned to W.2.3 narrative standards - Collect writing samples for portfolios - Optional oral presentations or Flipgrid recordings

**Documentation Tools:** - Photos of storyboards or comics - Annotated checklists - Audio or video recordings of student readings

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## SECTION 9: TROUBLESHOOTING & TIPS

**Common Challenges:** - Students stop after two events - Stories lack connection between attempts

**Adam's Pro Tips:** - Prompt: "What ELSE could happen? What changes on the third try?" - Use drama: Act out the rule of three with class volunteers - Have backup examples of funny or relatable "third try wins"

**Resource Alternatives:** - Use three-part templates for struggling writers - Digital storytelling apps (e.g., Book Creator, StoryJumper) - Try nonfiction: "The time I learned to ride a bike" with 3 stages

# Rule of Three Story Strip

Draw or write about what happens in each part of your story:

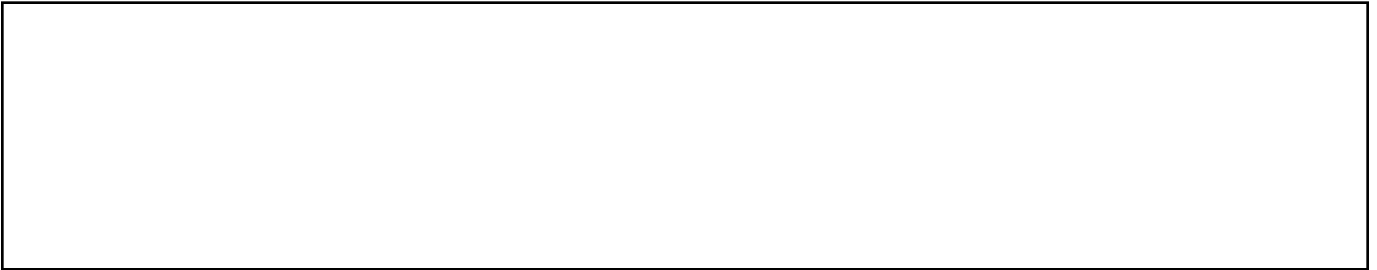
## First Try



## Second Try



## Third Try (Success!)



## Story Sparks Quick Wins: Bite-Sized Creative Activities for the K-5 Classroom

These low-prep, high-engagement "Quick Wins" are perfect when you need a fast literacy burst that gets students thinking, creating, and connecting. Each activity takes under 20 minutes and includes step-by-step instructions, curriculum alignment, and differentiation ideas.

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### ACTIVITY 1: Pun-Based Inspiration

**Time:** 15–20 minutes \ **Skills:** Wordplay, figurative language, creative writing \ **Featured Spark:** Inspired by t-shirt slogans or classroom posters

#### Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Look around your classroom or invite students to share funny/clever graphic t-shirts, posters, or sticker slogans.
2. Pick one pun as a class (e.g., "Taco 'Bout Awesome!" or "Donut Give Up").
3. Challenge students to write a four-line poem or story inspired by the pun. Keep it silly, dramatic, or sweet.
4. Share a few aloud, and if time allows, draw a mini scene to match the pun.

#### Curriculum Alignment:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.2.5 (Use words and phrases for effect)
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.3 (Narrative writing)
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.1 (Participate in conversations)

#### Differentiation Strategies:

- **ELLs:** Offer visuals of common puns and sentence starters.
- **Struggling writers:** Use fill-in-the-blank pun prompts.
- **Advanced learners:** Include a twist ending or extend to an 8-line story.

#### Leveling Ideas:

- **Younger students:** Draw a picture and label it with a pun.
  - **Older students:** Write a short dialogue or comic strip inspired by the pun.
- 

### ACTIVITY 2: One-Word Swap Stories

**Time:** 10–15 minutes \ **Skills:** Rhythm, rhyme, vocabulary nuance, repetition

#### Step-by-Step Instructions:

1. Write a short sentence or phrase structure on the board (e.g., "The \_\_\_ frog jumped").

2. As a class or individually, swap one word multiple times: "The sleepy frog jumped. The grumpy frog jumped. The ninja frog jumped."
3. Challenge students to pick their favorite swap and turn it into a micro-story or silly poem.
4. Share responses aloud or illustrate favorite versions.

**Curriculum Alignment:**

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.1.5 (Word relationships and nuances)
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.1.3 (Phonics and word recognition)
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.K.3 (Narratives through drawing or writing)

**Differentiation Strategies:**

- **ELLs:** Provide a word bank with visuals.
- **Struggling readers:** Use a picture card and orally describe the swap.
- **Advanced learners:** Make it rhyme or build a story chain.

**Leveling Ideas:**

- **Younger students:** Use pictures and swap the word orally.
- **Older students:** Write a 3–5 line stanza or multiple swap variations in sequence.

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**ACTIVITY 3: Character Collaboration Talk**

**Time:** 15–20 minutes\ **Skills:** SEL, character analysis, writing from experience\ **Featured Book:** *Cats in Construction Hats* by Sudipta Bardhan-Quallen and Leeza Hernandez

**Step-by-Step Instructions:**

1. Read or summarize *Cats in Construction Hats*, focusing on how cats and rats work together.
2. Facilitate a brief discussion: "What did each character do to help? Why was that important?"
3. Transition to real life: Ask, "Who helps you when things get tough?"
4. Students write a few sentences or draw a scene showing someone in their life who helps them.

**Curriculum Alignment:**

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.1.3 (Describe characters)
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.8 (Recall and write about experiences)
- SEL Competencies: Relationship skills, gratitude, self-awareness

**Differentiation Strategies:**

- **ELLs:** Use visuals and sentence starters ("My helper is...")
- **Struggling writers:** Dictate story to a peer or draw the helper.
- **Advanced learners:** Add a paragraph about how they would help someone else in return.

**Leveling Ideas:**

- **Younger students:** Focus on one character and one helper in their life.
  - **Older students:** Compare character teamwork to real-life helpers and explain the parallel.
- 

These Story Sparks are designed to energize your day, build confidence, and make space for creative expression—all without needing 30 minutes of prep. Use them as warm-ups, centers, early-finisher tasks, or SEL tie-ins.

For more, visit <https://adamlehrhaupt.com/teachers-guides-2/>