

Sample Pages
Five Question
Story Writing

for Young Authors
Looking for Inspiration

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Five Question Story Writing

Introduction/Instructions

The twenty writing activities in this lesson pack present action cartoons as story sparks. The accompanying five questions, based on the illustrations, are designed to help students construct the plots.

Each activity is composed of:

- an organizing page with an action cartoon that represents the heart of the story.
- five questions that pertain to the illustration—a somewhat loose version *who, what, when, where, why*, but with a story plot sequence in mind.
- space for students to jot down responses for each question. (Leave the back of the page blank for more ideas.)
- a lined page, complete with the inspirational cartoon, for writing the final version of the story. Of course, composing at the computer is also highly acceptable!
- a second, lined page (at the end of the full pack) for those times when stories can't be contained on a single page.

A suggested **grading rubric** suitable for all activities, which is included at the end of all writing activity forms, addresses the following story-writing components:

- *A story happens when a character has a **problem to solve**.* Advise students not to get stumped trying to invent great mystery and intrigue. Interesting story problems happen every day to regular people. Finding a lost homework paper in the bottom of a laundry hamper or making a new friend on the first day of school are both good examples.
- *Stories have a **beginning, a middle, and an end**.* Addressing all five questions will give students the combination of ideas needed to complete this structure.
- ***Cause and effect** are essential story elements.* Each story event should be the result of some previous action. The ending flurry of events must be connected to things that started in the story's beginning and moved to the middle.
- *Stories do **not have to be told in a specific order**.* Beginning in the middle or even at the end can often make a good story even better. Authors must take care, however, that all parts of the sequence are present. If they begin in the middle, for example, they must go back and tell what happened before, bring the reader up to the middle, and then write about what happens next. Beginning a story by telling the reader the ending requires an explanation of all the events that led up to the ending.
- *Well-told stories include **sequencing words and phrases** such as*

<i>next</i>	<i>then</i>	<i>before that</i>	<i>several hours earlier</i>	<i>before long</i>
<i>afterwards</i>	<i>finally</i>	<i>first</i>	<i>finally</i>	<i>later</i>
<i>after that</i>	<i>to being with</i>	<i>by 2 O'clock</i>	<i>shortly thereafter</i>	<i>eventually</i>
- *Good stories are filled with **action verbs**—*rushed, skittered, galloped* instead of *ran*, for example. Or *shouted, yelled, bellowed, chirped, whispered* rather than *said*.*



Use the illustration above and your answers to the questions below to create ideas for a story. Of course, you may add extra tidbits of your very own to make your story more interesting. Write on the back of this paper if you need more room. Give your story a name.

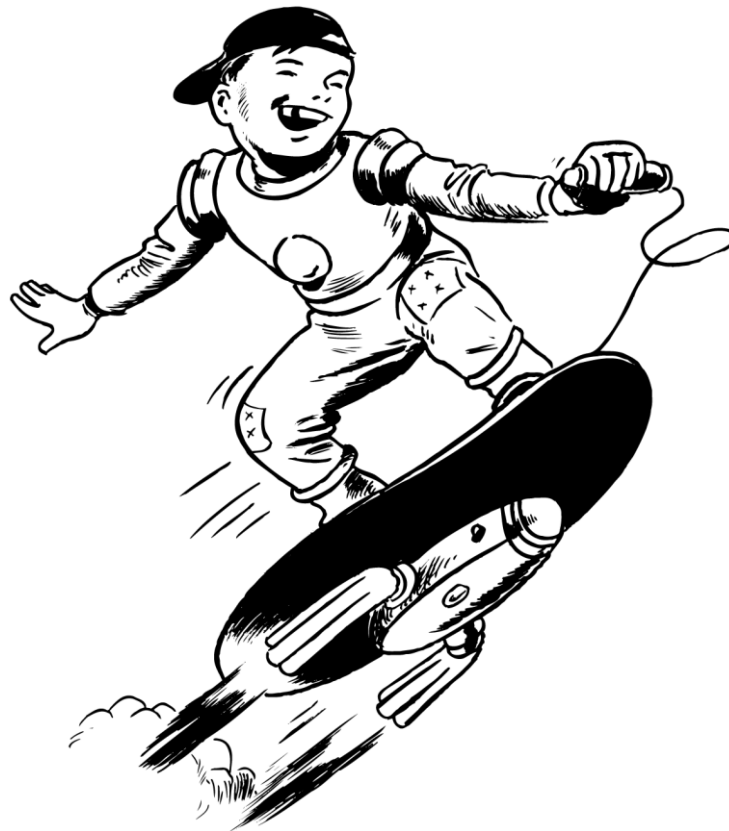
1. Who are the people in the cartoon? _____

2. Why are they all smiling? _____

3. What is the boy with the flat-top hair saying to the dark-haired girl? How does she respond? _____

4. Where are they going? _____

5. What will happen during the next hour? _____



Use the illustration above and your answers to the questions below to create ideas for a story. Of course, you may add extra tidbits of your very own to make your story more interesting. Write on the back of this paper if you need more room. Give your story a name.

1. What has been happening for several days before the action in this picture began? _____

2. What is the boy thinking? _____

3. Who is watching this action and why? _____

4. Where will the boy and the skateboard be the next day? _____

5. When will the boy ride the skateboard again? _____
