

Speak Up
Six Traits: Developing the Author's Voice Lesson

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Grade level: Intermediate Grades – Middle School

Content areas: English Language Arts
Six Traits Writing – Developing Voice

Invitation: When I'm at home, it's channel 52. Everything from . . .

Dog bites to street fights
Blustering attorneys to run away juries
Exhibits, evidence, oaths and pleas
Statements, objections, rulings – decrees

It's Court TV. America's fascination with the judicial system seemed to explode in the mid-90s – so much so that an entire cable channel launched as all of us stole a look inside our nation's courtrooms.

If you've witnessed a closing argument, you've seen the writer's voice in action. The writer's voice is a tool used by authors to share emotion and personal perspective with the reader. Authors use voice to add power to the paper. In this lesson, you develop your own voice in writing.

Assessment: Students focus on voice in writing as they complete a Discussion Web and write a persuasive narrative. Think of it as a closing argument.

Technology Tools

Dana by AlphaSmart or Dana Wireless
Computer
Printer
AlphaWord
DateBook
PiCo Map (<http://www.goknow.com>)

Additional Resources

Stone Fox (by John Reynolds Gardiner)

Internet sites:

Learn about Six Traits writing from the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory

<http://www.nwrel.org/assessment/scoring.asp?odelay=3&d=1&r=1#definition>

National Standards for Students

National Educational Technology Standards

- Understand basic concepts and operations
- Practice responsible use
- Use technology tools to enhance learning, collaborate, publish and promote creativity.
- Use telecommunications and a variety of media and formats to communicate.

National Council of Teachers of English

- Employ a wide range of writing strategies
- Apply knowledge of language structure and conventions
- Conduct research
- Use technological and information resources
- Participate in literacy communities.

For a detailed explanation of NETS for Students visit: http://cnets.iste.org/students/s_stands.html
Learn more about NCTE Standards at: <http://www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/110846.htm>

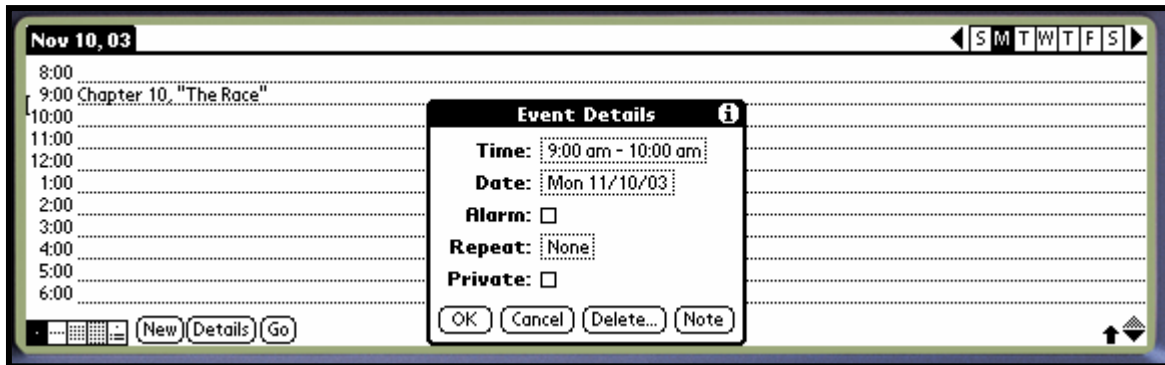
Step-by-Step

Step 1: Preparation

Introduce Stone Fox by John Reynolds Gardiner.

Step 2: Set up a modified reading log using the DateBook. To do this:

1. Launch the DateBook , select day view and tap the class hour.
2. Enter the chapter or page numbers read.
3. Tap the Details button. When the Event Details window opens, tap the Note button to add notes to the entry.



4. Each day, students read selected chapters, record beginning and ending time for their reading and add a note in the form of a reading journal. You may allow free writing in the journal or use specific prompts. For example:

"As I read today, I couldn't help but think of"

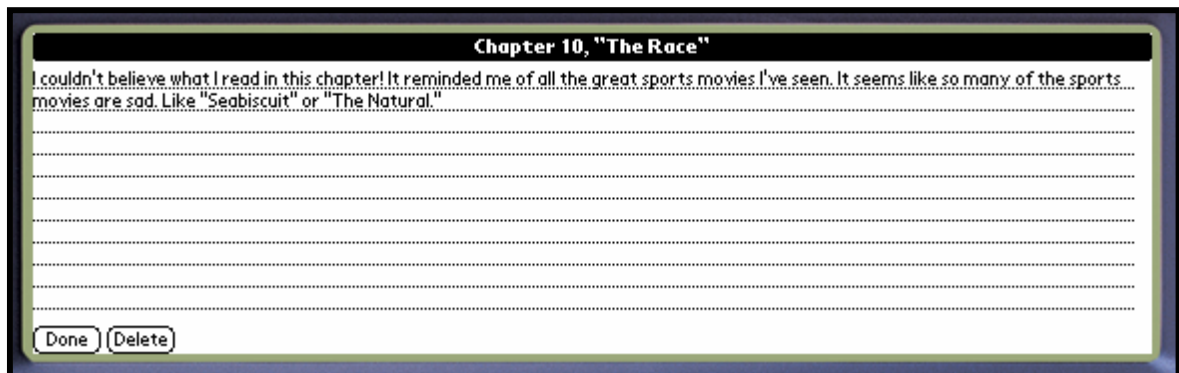
" _____ (select a character) reminds me of . . . "

"I empathize with Willy because"

"I empathize with Stone Fox because"

"This reminds me of" (write about similar books, authors, folktales, etc.)

" A better ending would have been"



Students print their DateBook Reading Logs using PrintBoy. Here's how:

1. Launch PrintBoy (If necessary, tap the Setup Printer button and select the printer and connection.)
2. Tap Appointments on the PrintBoy screen
3. Select a single date, a week or a range of dates to print.
4. Students' chapter entry and notes will print. Like this:

Date Book November 10, 2003

Mon 11/10/03

9:30 am – 10:25 am

Chapter 10

Note:

I couldn't believe what I read in this chapter! It reminded me of all the great sports movies I've seen. It seems like so many of the sports movies are sad. Like "Seabiscuit" or "The Natural."

Tuesday 11/11/03

9:30 am – 10:25 am

Epilog

Note:

This was really interesting. I want to learn more about the legend.

Step 3: Discussion Web

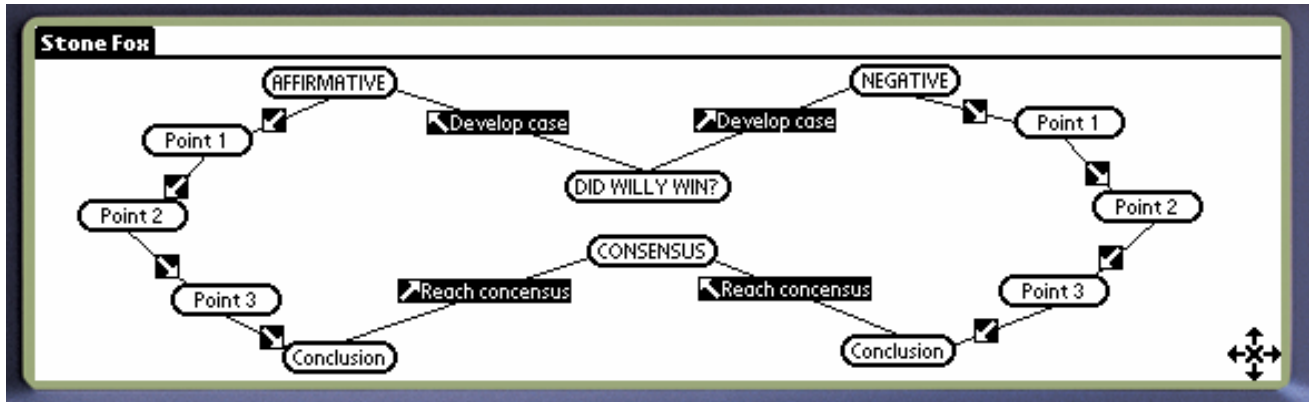
Introduce the concept of a Discussion Web (see Discussion Web teacher resource at the end of this lesson). Talk about debate, perspective and working with both sides of an argument. Also, discuss the subtle differences between "reaching a conclusion" and "coming to consensus." In this lesson, students reach conclusions as they work independently; however when they share their work with members of a small group, each must share his/her conclusion. The group evaluates and comes to consensus.

Teachers may want to consider doing a Discussion Web as a whole class activity so that students thoroughly understand the process.

Step 4: Did Willy Win the Race?

Students reread Chapter 10, "The Race" and complete the Discussion Web using PiCo Map. The focus question of the Discussion Web is "Did Willy Win? Work through the Discussion Web in this order:

- 1st – Students work individually to complete the Discussion Web
- 2nd – Students work in partners to beam and merge PiCo Maps
- 3rd – Partners share perspectives and come to consensus
- 4th – Two sets of partners join to form a group of 4
- 5th - Partners beam and merge PiCo Maps
- 6th – Each group of 4 shares perspective and comes to consensus



Step 5: Consensus of the whole

Select one member from each group to present the group's consensus. Did Willy win the race? Typically, students talk about "deserving" to win. Talk about ways that we write about "cold, hard facts" and that if "cold, hard facts" were all in consideration, then Willy did not win the race because the race was forfeited by Stone Fox and all other competitors. When you consider voice and emotion; however, perhaps Willy did win the race.

Students develop voice when they using emotional language, such as "*deserved to win*" and "*compensation* for losing his dog."

Step 6: Extend the learning

Have students write an epilog. What happened to Willy? His grandfather? Stone Fox?

Use the Discussion Web strategy to analyze current events. Look at political news from more than one news source.

Follow with Gary Paulsen's "Older Run" as published in the Language of Literature (6th grade) by McDougal Littell.