

DICKENS MOMENT

Tap into students' natural abilities to write and tell stories.

Brief Description

Students review components or sections of information and think of a story they could tell others using that information. The information can be transformed into characters that interact, solve challenges, dialogue, etc. Students could simply prepare an outline of a story or actually craft the story itself. Challenge students to be creative and to show they can use the information in a different way than was presented to them. Here's one way to use a Dickens Moment with your students.

The Process

1. *List the components.* Either as a class or as individuals, list the components of the newly learned information. For example: Math: order of operations—Parentheses, Exponents, Multiplication, Division, Addition, Subtraction. (You could build on the idea of Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally and create a story about Aunt Sally and her peculiar order of doing things.)
2. *Turn the components into characters.* Either in small groups, as an entire class, or as individuals, assign each of the components character names and characteristics. Example: Parey Theses—always trying to hold things together, Exter Ponents—thinks he's above everyone else, Multi Plication—organizes everything in groups, Di Vision—causes disruption, Addy Tion—the match maker, and Subby Traction—always taking what others have. These six kids live in adjacent houses on Math Street.
3. *Create a story line.* There are many from which to choose: man versus man, man versus nature, man versus himself. Story lines often solve a problem and cast characters in dialogue with one another. Example: our math characters are called upon in order, house by house, by a neighbor kid who is looking to find a lost X-Men action figure.
4. *Write and/or tell the story.* Depending on time constraints, participants can tell the story to one another, the whole group or develop the story in written form with greater detail.

Remember: This is not a story writing contest, but rather a creative way to develop understanding and

make connections with newly acquired material. Let your participants play with character development (voice, physical/character attributes) and conflict-resolution. Engaging in the

act of taking content and embedding it in the elements of story is more important than the mechanics of grammar, plot development and theme.

SmartTip



The Dickens Moment taps into students' linguistic, intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences.



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