Uh Oh! Prickly Problems and Super Solutions

- *Mutasia: Land of Illogical & Utterly Impossible Critters*
- *Lesson Plan 2*
Introduction:
In this lesson, students plan out a story focused on a clear problem and solution. They have the option of acting out and filming the story as well.

Total Time:
1. Day 1: 65 minutes
2. Day 2: 45 minutes
3. Optional days 3 and 4, 50 minutes each

Social/Emotional Concept:
Problem Solving

Academic Standard:
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly (W 3.2); Produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose (W 3.4)

Teaching the Standard:
1. Gather students at the rug or other meeting area, seated beside a partner. A student can pass out the materials to the children’s desks; each pair will need the Prickly Problems graphic organizer, the Mutasian Characters sheet, the rubric, and writing/illustrating materials (i.e. paper and pencil, laptop, or tablet). Tell students that every exciting story has a problem and a solution. Give a couple of examples from well known fairy tales or read alouds you have done with the class, like The 3 Little Pigs (the wolf is trying to eat them) or The Fantastic Mr. Fox (the foxes are trapped in their den and they’re starving to death.) You may want to have examples on hand; you can also use movies, TV shows, and video games as examples. Ask the kids to think of additional examples in problems from books, movies, TV, or video games (Transformers, Dragonball Z, Super Mario Brothers, etc.) Tell them that the solution to the problem usually comes near the end of the story—for example, the three little pigs end up boiling the wolf when he comes down the last pig’s chimney, and the foxes tunnel underneath the mean farmers’ storehouses of food in The Fantastic Mr. Fox. 3 minutes
2. Turn to Flavian’s page (4 from the end) in Mutasia: Land of Illogical & Utterly Impossible Critters. Ask what the nibs’ problem is. Tell the kids to try to think of a solution to the nibs’ problem, and have them do a think-pair-share with their partner on possible solutions (they could trick Flavian, they could run away, someone could come and save them, etc.) Tell the kids that today they will plan and write a story with a problem and a solution. 3 minutes
Practice the Process:
1. Put up the Prickly Problems graphic organizer on the document camera or overhead projector. Tell students that most stories follow a similar structure: first everything is fine, then a problem arises, the characters solve the problem, and at the end everything is fine again. Today, the students will work in partners to create a story where one of the Mutasians from *Mutasia: Land of Illogical & Utterly Impossible Critters* has a problem that he/she/it solves. Tell them to watch silently as you turn the pages, but to point to a page when they see an animal they think is especially interesting, then point to their own head, as a physical way of mentally storing the image for the problem in the story they will write. Model this process with one of the illustrations; for example, Helmut Von Seal might get washed out to sea by a storm and needs to find his way back to Mutasia. Ask students to suggest a solution to the problem you pose. After the picture walk, have students do a “think-pair-share” where they talk to a partner sitting next to them about a couple of the coolest animals they noticed. 5 minutes

2. Complete the graphic organizer with the example you gave before the picture walk (i.e. Helmut Von Seal), having students suggest a sentence or brief notes to write in each box. Then begin the process of turning the graphic organizer into a written story. You might point out that whether you begin the story with dialogue, a description of the setting, or immediate action, the problem should be presented early in the story. 9 minutes

3. Show the class the student rubric, then have them do a think-pair-share with a partner about which character they will choose, what the character’s problem will be, and what the solution will be. A few students can share out. 3 minutes

4. Students can go get started on the graphic organizer now. Remind them about important things to do when working together, like being flexible if their partner doesn’t agree with what the problem and solution should be. You may want to present an anchor chart of “Great Things To Say When We Work Together,” with lines like, “That’s a great idea!” and “I think we should ___ because ____.” I would have both students complete their own graphic organizer and write their own copy of the story, though the two partners’ stories should be pretty much identical. Circle around while students work, choosing a couple of pairs who can share during “Author’s Chair.” After a pair is done, have them first look at the rubric to see what score they would give their story. Then they can exchange stories with another pair who is done, to see whether the readers can identify the problem and solution. Students who finish early can illustrate their story. 32 minutes
5. Bring students back to the rug; pairs who are going to share should bring their graphic organizer and story. Put up the story where the class can see it and tell them to first touch their ear when they hear what the problem is, then touch their ear again when they hear the solution to that problem. After the authors finish the story, have the listeners do a think-pair-share on what the problem and solution were, then put up the pair’s graphic organizer to see if the listeners were right. Finally, tell students to pay attention to two things over the next couple of days: problems they encounter in their own lives and the solutions they come up with, and problems and solutions they see in books, TV shows, movies, or computer games. 10 minutes

6. Independent work: You can have students do the exact same sequence the following day, but this time they will complete the graphic organizer and write the story independently rather than working with a partner. Remind them of the process they did today and revisit the rubric (5 minutes) while a student distributes materials, let them complete the ad (30 minutes), and have two or three students share at Author’s Chair, having the other students identify the problem and solution in each story (10 minutes).

7. Extension: As a third lesson, you can have students work in pairs to create a story with a problem/solution for a character they choose on their own rather than picking a Mutasian character. This could be a Mutasian they create, a realistic story about a regular boy or girl, or a memoir about an actual problem they had and solved. As a fourth lesson, students can do the same thing independently. (50 minutes for each lesson: 10-minute mini lesson to model the process, 30 minutes to work, 10 minutes for Author’s Chair)

Assessment:
Pay attention as you circle to whether the problem fits the character, and whether the solution fits the problem. Make sure students are not writing the story in the graphic organizer—they should just be writing a sentence, phrase, or bulleted words in each box. Once students have written the stories, you can go through them to identify “next-step” mini-lessons; for example, if you don’t see much dialogue, you might plan a lesson on how to write dialogue. Finally, pay attention to examples of pairs working well together to point out and praise after the lesson, along with examples of problems that pairs had; you can brainstorm solutions to these problems (like disagreeing about what the problem in the story should be) with the group.

Celebrations of Achievement:
You may want to make a copy of the Prickly Problem Solvers’ certificate for each child to receive at the lesson’s conclusion.
Ancillary Items:
1. Prickly Problems graphic organizer
2. Student and teacher rubric
3. Mutasian Characters sheet
4. Prickly Problem Solvers certificate

Supply List:
1. A copy of the book *Mutasia: Land of Illogical & Utterly Impossible Critters*
2. Student and teacher rubric
3. Prickly Problems graphic organizer
4. Mutasian Characters sheet
5. Writing materials (paper/pencil or laptops/tablets)
6. Examples of books/TV shows/movies/video games with a clear problem and solution
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Rubric:</th>
<th>2 (I care a little bit about how the character will solve the problem.)</th>
<th>3 (I’m excited/anxious to see how the character solves the problem.)</th>
<th>4 (I can’t wait to see how the character solves the problem!)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has a problem and solution BUT they’re not clearly connected</td>
<td>Clear problem connected to a clear solution</td>
<td>Exciting problem and solution</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Solution doesn’t make sense</td>
<td>Solution makes sense</td>
<td>Solution is creative or unexpected but makes sense</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Story is confusing in places</td>
<td>Story is clear</td>
<td>Story is fun, funny, scary, and/or exciting to read</td>
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**Student Rubric:**

- 2 (I care a little bit about how the character will solve the problem.)
- 3 (I’m excited/anxious to see how the character solves the problem.)
- 4 (I can’t wait to see how the character solves the problem!)

**Rubric Notes:**
- Has a problem and solution BUT they’re not clearly connected
- Clear problem connected to a clear solution
- Exciting problem and solution
- Solution doesn’t make sense
- Solution makes sense
- Solution is creative or unexpected but makes sense
- Story is confusing in places
- Story is clear
- Story is fun, funny, scary, and/or exciting to read
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Partially Meets (2)</th>
<th>Meets (3)</th>
<th>Masters (4)</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using clear event sequences (W 3.3)</td>
<td>Sequence of events is missing 1 key event or 2 events seem out of order</td>
<td>Sequence of events is logical</td>
<td>Sequence of events is logical and creates suspense</td>
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<tr>
<td>Produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose (W 3.4)</td>
<td>Contains both a problem and a solution BUT connection isn’t clear</td>
<td>Clear connection between problem and solution</td>
<td>Compelling problem and creative solution</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Problem doesn’t make sense for the character</td>
<td>Problem fits the character</td>
<td>Problem/solution provide insight into character</td>
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<td>Prickly Problems Graphic Organizer by:</td>
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<td><strong>Beginning (all is fine)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Solution!</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Solution!</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>End (all is fine again)</strong></td>
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**MUTASIA**

CREATIVE EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT
Prickly Problem Solver's Certificate

Mutasia presents:

with this certificate because he/she is a Prickly Problem Solver who creates sticky situations for his/her characters, then gets them out of trouble in creative ways.

CERTIFIED AWESOME!