

Reading as Writers: Analyzing Mentor Texts to Enhance Our Writing

Guiding Questions

| Focus: Beginning a Story | |
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| How does the author begin this story? What specific writing moves does the writer use to pull the reader right into story? | What are possible places to begin your story? What strategy for starting a story do you want to try in your own writing? How does this strategy fit what you want to accomplish with your own writing? |
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| Focus: Use of Dialogue | |
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| Choose a place in the mentor text where you find the dialogue interesting. What makes the dialogue interesting to you? How does the writer shift between speakers but still keep it clear who is talking? Notice where the author uses speech tags (e.g., he said), where the author does not use speech tags, and where the author uses additional description alongside dialogue. | What purposes do you have for adding dialogue to your story? What dialogue strategy do you want to try in your own writing? How does this strategy fit what you want to accomplish with your own writing? |
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Focus: Building Suspense

Choose a place in the mentor text where the author builds suspense and makes you want to keep reading. What specific writing techniques does the author use to build excitement or anxiety in you as a reader?

Where do you want to build suspense in your writing? What strategy do you want to try? How does this strategy fit what you want to accomplish with your own writing?

Focus: The Passage of Time

Notice the way the author treats the passage of time in the mentor text. Which scenes or moments does the author bring the reader directly into, and which scenes does the author summarize or skip over, to keep the pace of the story going?

In your own writing, which scenes are most important to your story? What strategy for showing the passage of time do you want to try in your own writing? How does this strategy fit what you want to accomplish with your own writing?