

Narrative Graffiti

Using Kathryn Tucker Windham's *It's Christmas!*

Teacher: Allison Lee, Opelika High School

Title: Narrative Graffiti

Grade Levels: 10 (can be adapted for any grade level)

Content Areas: English Language Arts

Description/Abstract of Lesson: After a short holiday narrative is read aloud, students “graffiti” a “wall” in the classroom with images of their own holiday memories. Using these images, students craft their own narratives recounting a holiday tradition or a favorite holiday memory. Relates to writing for the Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing.

Timeline: This lesson will only take one to two days, but an introduction to narrative writing, its requirements, and elements of plot are required for the most effective results.

Goals/Objectives:

After this lesson, students will be able to:

- Use graphics and illustrations to generate writing topics.
- Write narrative nonfiction about past holiday experiences.
- Incorporate the requirements of a narrative in their own writing.
- Incorporate the elements of plot in their own narrative writing.

Curriculum Standards:

Alabama Course of Study, English, 10th grade:

7. Write in persuasive, expository, and narrative modes using an abbreviated writing process in timed and untimed situations.

8. Write in a variety of genres for various audiences and occasions, both formal and informal, using an attention-getting opening and an effective conclusion.

Alabama Course of Study, Occupational English, 10th grade:

1. Recognize main idea in written, oral, and visual formats.
2. Follow simple oral and written directions given in a variety of situations.
9. Demonstrate the basic conventions of standard English.
11. Select and use various sequential patterns to organize information.

Alabama High School Graduation Exam Standards, Language:

Standard II, Objective 1: Use words that create clarity, precision, and vivid description.

Standard II, Objective 2: Use formal and informal language appropriately.

Standard V, Objective 1: Determine logical progression and completeness of paragraphs.

Information Literacy Standards, 10th grade:

- Recognize Alabama authors and their contributions from statehood to the 1990s.
- Identify the type of written selection by analyzing its characteristics.
- Recognize elements of plot in print form as well as in movies and plays.
- Sequence events.

Pre-Lesson Activities:

Prior to this lesson, students will be introduced to narrative writing, its definition (a story), its requirements (title, plot, and dialogue), and elements of plot (characters, setting, conflict, conflict resolution).

Learning Activities or Tasks:

Read Kathryn Tucker Windham's holiday memoir *It's Christmas!* aloud to the class. Then, prompt a class discussion about the narrative using questions such as *What is this story about? What holiday traditions does the narrator tell about? How does the narrator feel about Christmas? How do we know? What are the conflicts in this book? How are the conflicts resolved? What was an item that was important to the narrator in this story?*

On the wall there should be a large piece of white butcher paper. Somewhere on the paper, the teacher should draw an item the students said they thought was important to the narrator in the story (stockings or flower bulbs, for example). The teacher can then model the process further by adding his or her own illustration while sharing a holiday anecdote of his or her own. (Note: It is important to emphasize other holidays than just Christmas for this lesson to prevent students of other faiths or ethnicities from feeling left out and to promote diversity in topics.)

Students will then come up and add illustrations of items that are important to their own favorite holidays or family traditions. By the time the entire class has added their illustrations, the butcher paper should be full, looking like a wall of graffiti on a street. From the illustrations drawn on the "narrative graffiti," students will write their own narratives, telling about their own favorite holiday traditions or experiences.

Materials:

- Kathryn Tucker Windham's *It's Christmas!*
- white butcher paper
- masking tape or thumbtacks
- crayons or markers

Resources:

- Alabama Literary Map (<http://alabamaliterarymap.org>)
- Teacher Vision (<http://www.teachervision.fen.com>)

Assessment:

Students will be graded on a 1-4 scale using the free printable narrative rubric at <http://www.teachervision.fen.com/rubrics/printable/26739.html>.