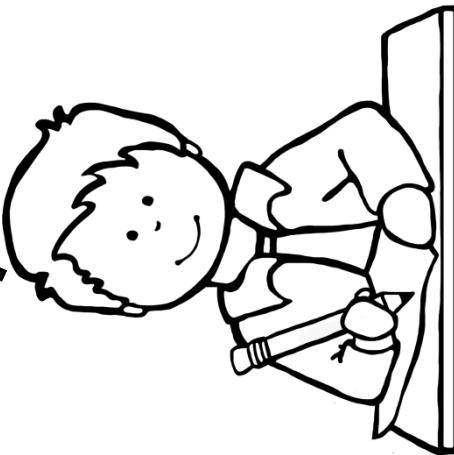


Writing the Hook

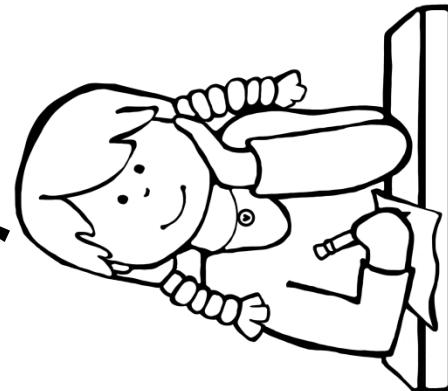
By Gay Miller

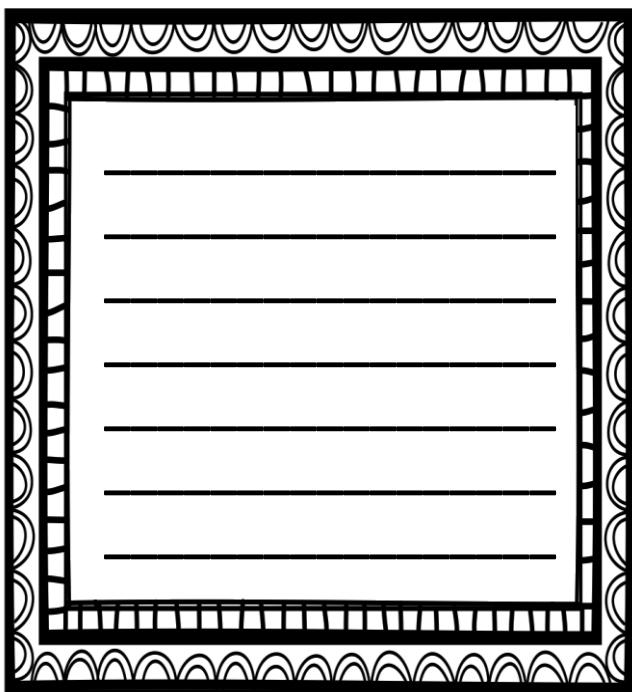
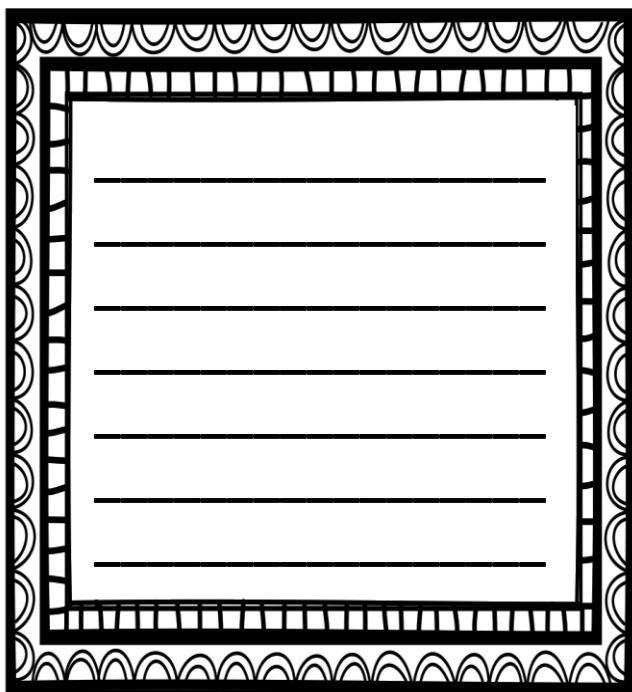
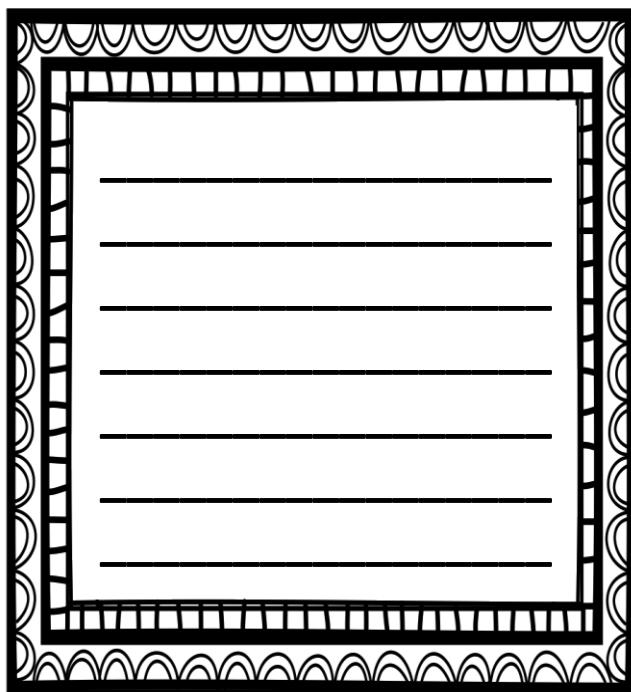
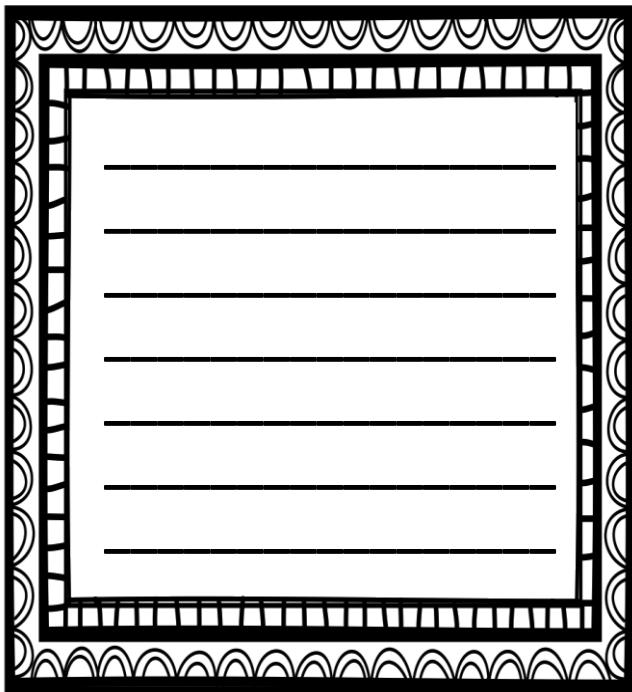
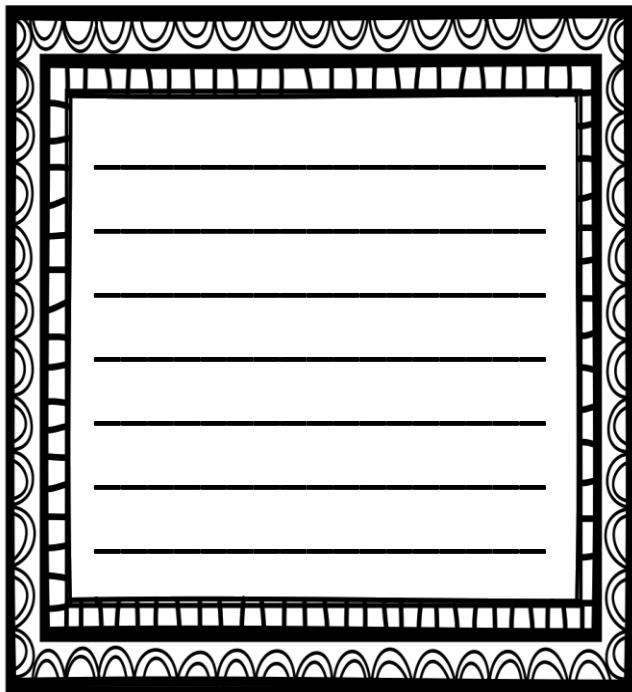
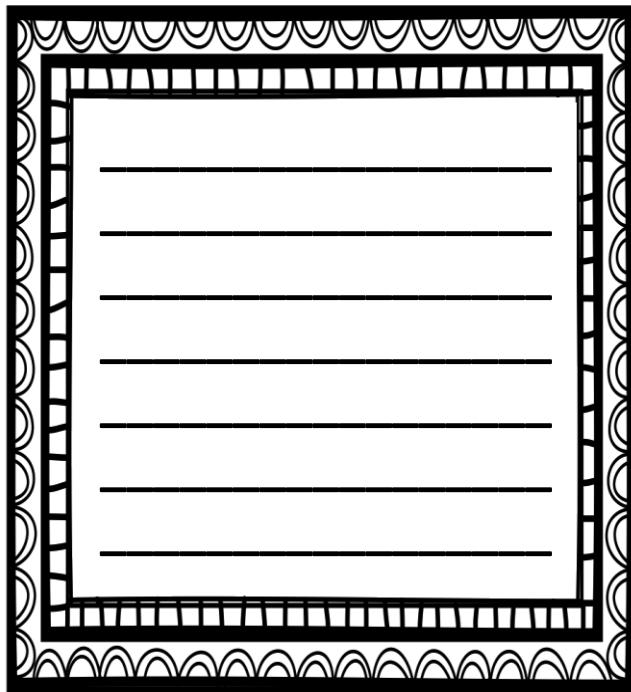


Story Hooks



Story Hooks





Begin with dialogue.
Use quotations either between two characters or have the narrator talk directly to the reader.

Begin by asking a question to get the reader thinking.

Begin with a vivid description. Be sure to use specific details that paint a picture.

Begin with an interesting fact. This can be a shocking statement.

Begin with a sound that is associated with the action that is taking place in the first scene of the story.
[Onomatopoeia]

“Hurry or you’ll be late!” called my mother from the bottom of the stairs. “Today of all days you want to be on time.” If I had only known what that day would bring, I would have stayed in bed.

Have you ever had a day when you wished you had stayed in bed? As I rushed to catch the bus on what seemed to be a perfectly normal day, I had no idea what was ahead of me.

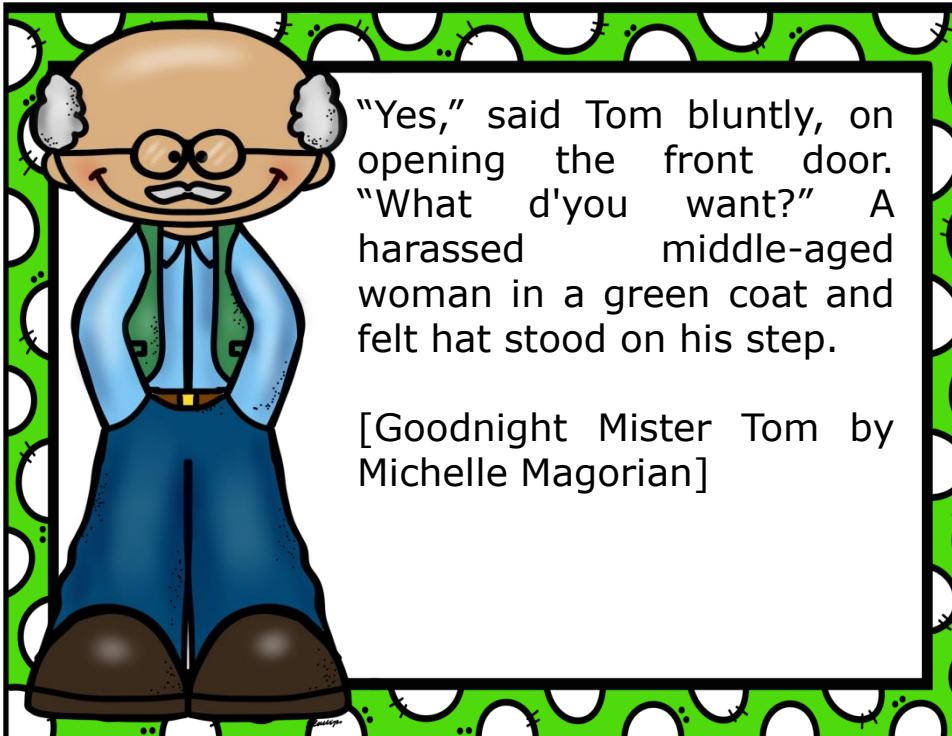
The sun was warm on my back as I raced toward the waiting yellow school bus. As I nestled into the worn leather seat, I was greeted by the friendly voices of other excited kids. The look on my face was one of confidence and contentment. With a jerk the bus rumbled down the road, and I was on my way to one of the worst days of my life.

Shock has been known to kill ten year olds. It can cause their brains to explode and their heart to stop dead still. These facts raced through my mind as I stood dumbfounded in front of my fifth grade classmates. I wish I had stayed in bed!

“Buzzzzzz!” The sound of my alarm clock droned in my ears as I struggled to come awake. With a start, I sat straight up in my bed. This was my big day, and I had to be on time.

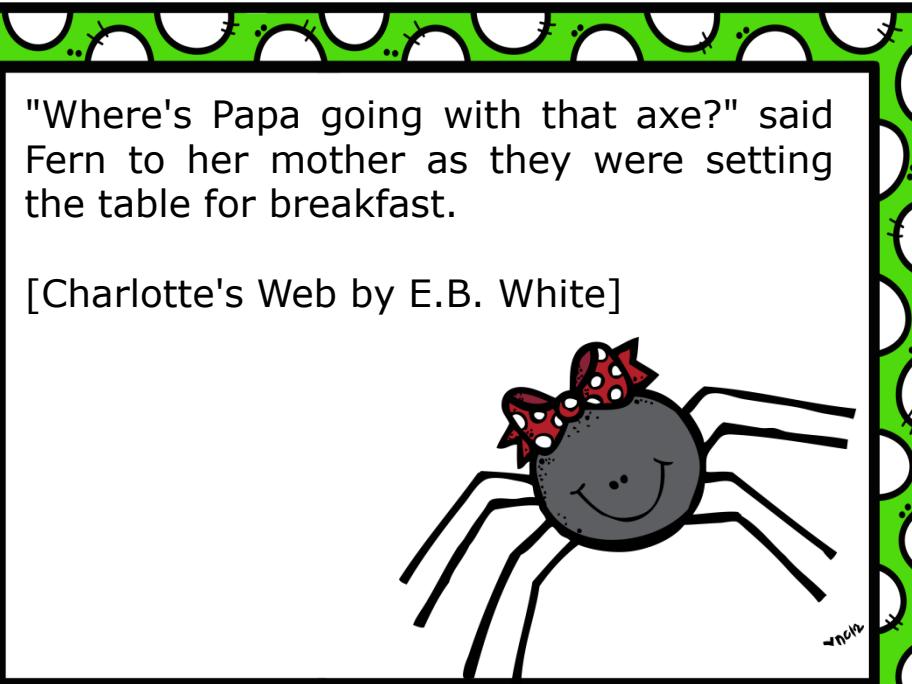
Examples of Vivid Narrative Hooks

 Book Title	 First Line	 Hook Type
The One and Only Ivan by Katherine Applegate	"Hello. I am Ivan. I am a gorilla. It is not as easy as it looks."	Dialogue (Unexpected Voice) – A gorilla narrator? Intriguing!
Charlotte's Web by E.B. White	"Where's Papa going with that axe?" said Fern to her mother as they were setting the table for breakfast.	A Question (Shocking Question) – immediate tension and curiosity
The Best Christmas Pageant Ever by Barbara Robinson	"The Herdmans were absolutely the worst kids in the history of the world."	An Interesting Fact (Bold Opinion) – strong voice and humor
Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Paterson	"Ba-room, ba-room, ba-room, bariety, bariety, bariety, bariety—Good."	Sound Effects (Sound Imagery) – action and rhythm pull you in
A Little Princess by Frances Hodgson Burnett	"Once on a dark winter's day, when the yellow fog hung so thick and heavy in the streets of London..."	A Vivid Description (Atmospheric Setting) – rich description sets the mood



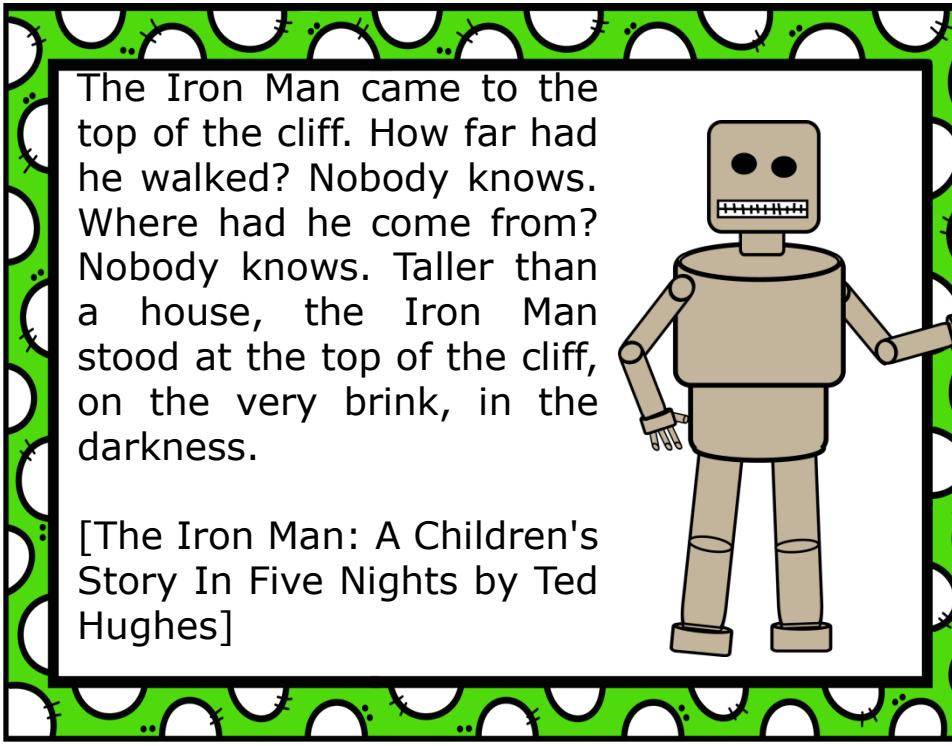
"Yes," said Tom bluntly, on opening the front door. "What d'you want?" A harassed middle-aged woman in a green coat and felt hat stood on his step.

[Goodnight Mister Tom by Michelle Magorian]



"Where's Papa going with that axe?" said Fern to her mother as they were setting the table for breakfast.

[Charlotte's Web by E.B. White]



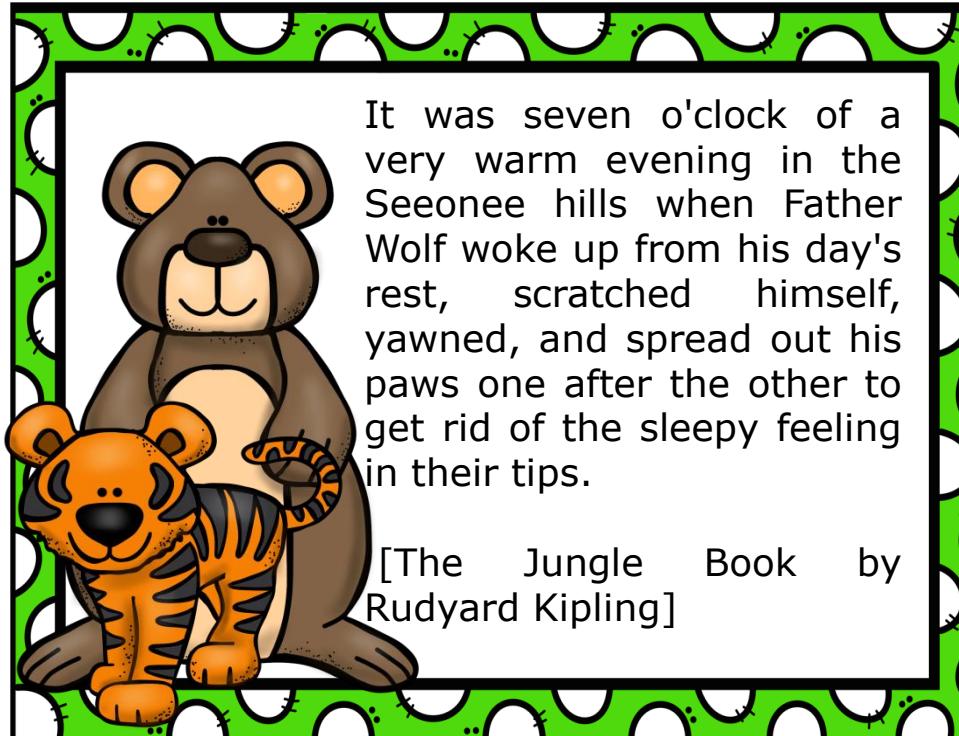
The Iron Man came to the top of the cliff. How far had he walked? Nobody knows. Where had he come from? Nobody knows. Taller than a house, the Iron Man stood at the top of the cliff, on the very brink, in the darkness.

[The Iron Man: A Children's Story In Five Nights by Ted Hughes]



Knock. knock. knock.

[Weasel by Cynthia DeFelice]



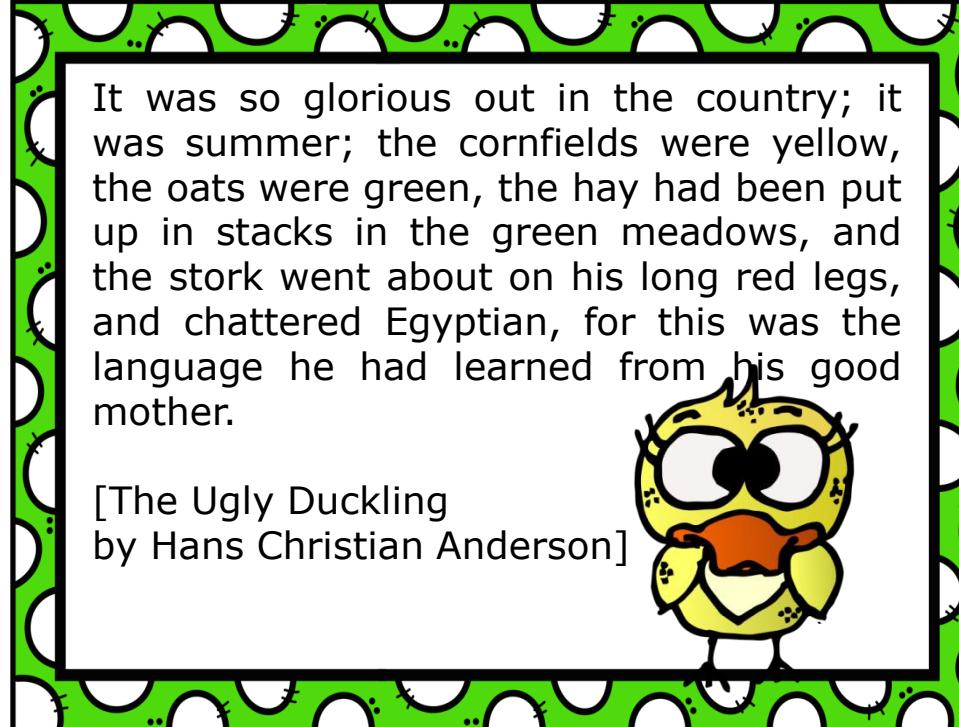
It was seven o'clock of a very warm evening in the Seeonee hills when Father Wolf woke up from his day's rest, scratched himself, yawned, and spread out his paws one after the other to get rid of the sleepy feeling in their tips.

[The Jungle Book by Rudyard Kipling]

Once on a dark winter's day, when the yellow fog hung so thick and heavy in the streets of London that the lamps were lighted and the shop windows blazed with gas as they do at night, an odd-looking little girl sat in a cab with her father and was driven rather slowly through the big thoroughfares.

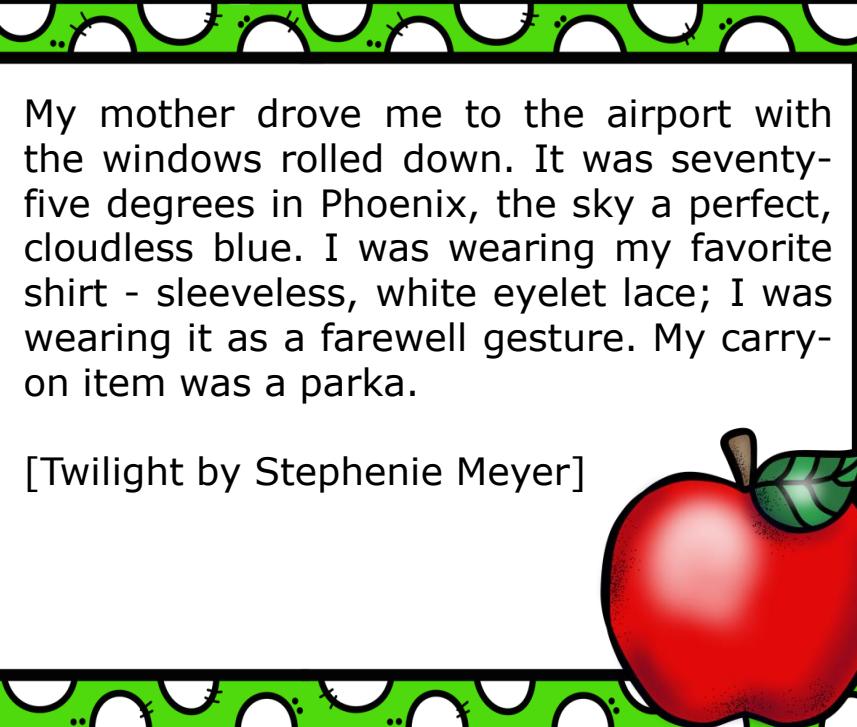


A Little Princess by Frances Hodgson Burnett]



It was so glorious out in the country; it was summer; the cornfields were yellow, the oats were green, the hay had been put up in stacks in the green meadows, and the stork went about on his long red legs, and chattered Egyptian, for this was the language he had learned from his good mother.

[The Ugly Duckling by Hans Christian Anderson]

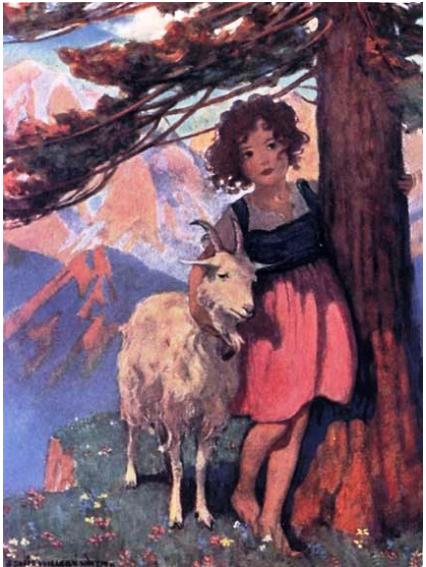


My mother drove me to the airport with the windows rolled down. It was seventy-five degrees in Phoenix, the sky a perfect, cloudless blue. I was wearing my favorite shirt - sleeveless, white eyelet lace; I was wearing it as a farewell gesture. My carry-on item was a parka.

[Twilight by Stephenie Meyer]

The pretty little Swiss town of Mayenfield lies at the foot of a mountain range, whose grim rigged peaks tower high above the valley below.

[Heidi by Johanna Spyri]



Most motorcars are conglomerations (this is a long word for bundles) of steel and wire and rubber and plastic, and electricity and oil and gasoline and water, and the toffee papers you pushed down the crack in the back seat last Sunday.



[Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang by Ian Fleming]

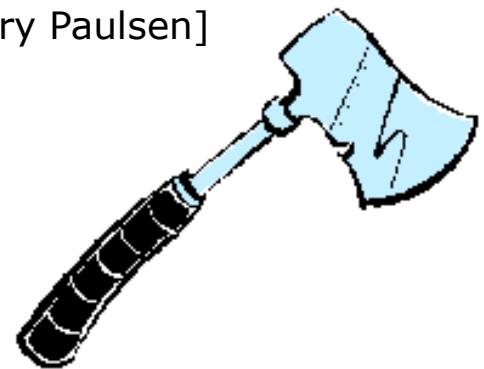


Mrs. Rachel Lynde lived just where the Avonlea main road dipped down into a little hollow, fringed with alders and ladies' eardrops and traversed by a brook that had its source away back in the woods of the old Cuthbert place"

[Anne of Green Gables by L.M. Montgomery]

Brian Robeson stared out of the window of the small plane at the endless green northern wilderness below.

[Hatchet by Gary Paulsen]



The Herdmans were absolutely the worst kids in the history of the world.

[The Best Christmas Pageant Ever by Barbara Robinson]



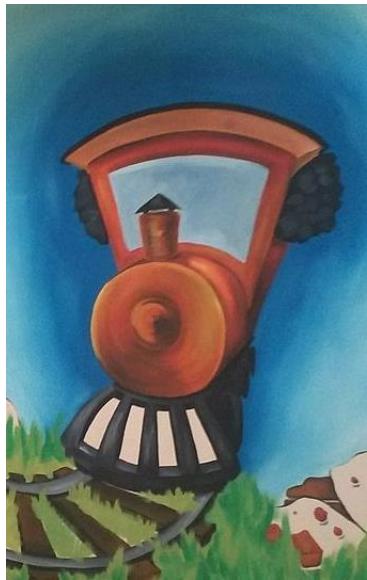
All children, except one, grow up.

[Peter Pan by J. M. Barrie]



Chug, chug, chug. Puff, puff, puff. Ding-dong, ding-dong.

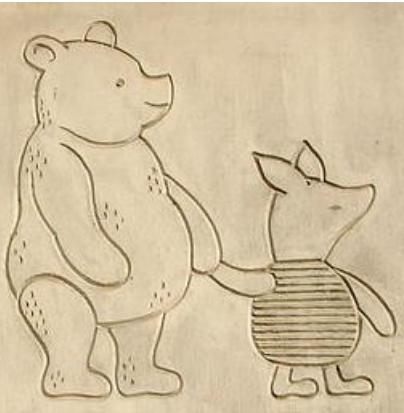
[The Little Engine that Could by Watty Piper]



Ba-room, ba-room, ba-room, barierty, barierty, barierty, barierty—Good.

[Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Paterson]





Here is Edward Bear, coming down the stairs now, bump bump bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin.

[Winnie-the-Pooh
by A.A. Milne]

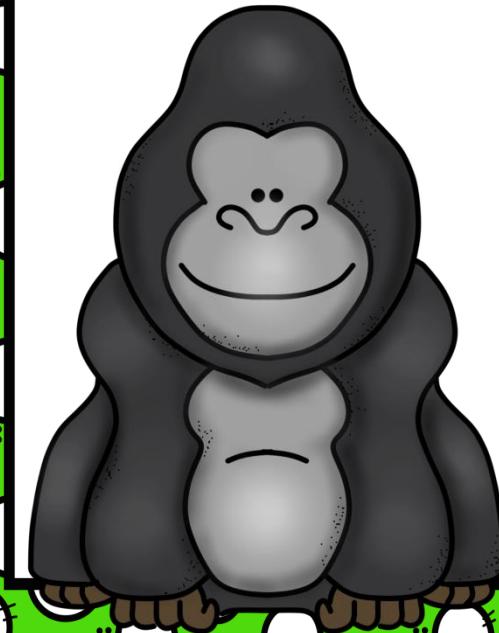
Marley was dead, to begin with.

[A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens]



"Christmas won't be Christmas without presents," grumbled Jo, lying on the rug.

[Little Women by Louisa May Alcott]



"Hello. I am Ivan. I am a gorilla. It is not as easy as it looks."

[The One and Only Ivan by Katherine Applegate]

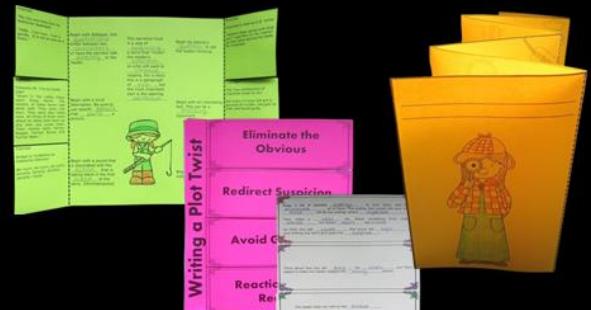
Answer Key

Dialogue	A Question	A Vivid Description	An Interesting Fact	Sound Effects
Goodnight Mister Tom	Charlotte's Web (or dialogue)	The Jungle Book	The Best Christmas Pageant Ever	The Little Engine that Could
Little Women	The Iron Man: A Children's Story In Five Nights	A Little Princess	Peter Pan	Bridge to Terabithia
The One and Only Ivan		The Ugly Duckling	A Christmas Carol	Winnie-the-Pooh
		Twilight		Weasel
		Heidi		
		Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang		
		Anne of Green Gables		
		Hatchet		

Check out the [Narrative Writing Lessons](#) on Teachers Pay Teachers.

Mystery Writing Unit

Step-by-Step Narrative Writing Lessons with Graphic Organizers



Digital • Printable Google Slides Included

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11 Lessons with Activities

SUSPECT: Jamie Thompson

- Role: Soccer Team Captain
- Alibi: Jamie says they were practicing with the soccer team in the gym until 6:30 PM. After practice, they claim they stayed to clean up equipment.
- Motive: Jamie has mentioned being frustrated that the soccer team didn't receive a trophy like the academic team did. They've expressed that the Golden Falcon should belong to a team that "actually plays hard."
- Suspicious Details: Jamie wears size 6 cleats, which matches the muddy footprint found near the trophy case. No one saw Jamie change out of their cleats after practice.



SUSPECT: Alex Garcia

- Role: School Reporter
- Alibi: Alex says they were taking yearbook photos around the school until 6:45 PM, then left to interview someone at the local coffee shop.
- Motive: Alex has been critical of the academic decathlon team in the past, writing an article accusing them of being "bad team players." Some students think Alex might have taken the trophy to make a statement.
- Suspicious Details: Alex's camera bag was found left near the library, close to the trophy case. They also seemed nervous when questioned.



SUSPECT: Ms. Lee

- Role: Science Teacher
- Alibi: Ms. Lee was grading papers in her classroom down the hall from the trophy case. She says she left the school at 7:00 PM.
- Motive: Ms. Lee has joked in the past that the trophy case would be a great spot for science fair displays. She's been advocating for more recognition of student scientists at the school.
- Suspicious Details: A sticky note with the phrase "Needs more space" was found in the trophy case, but Ms. Lee's shoes and classroom floor were spotless with no mud.



SUSPECT: Mia Lopez

- Role: Art Club President
- Alibi: Mia was painting in the art room until 6:50 PM. She says she left early to help her younger sibling with homework.
- Motive: Mia recently asked Principal Carter if the art club could showcase student artwork in the trophy case but was told it wasn't possible. Some students overheard her say, "I guess trophies are more important than creativity."
- Suspicious Details: A smudge of gold paint (similar to the color of the Golden Falcon trophy) was found on her apron.



Organizers

Step #1 Decide which view point write your story and stick with it.

Step #2 Write your hook. Be sure your hook uses the point of view you decided to use in Step #1.



Step #3 Describe your character in a specific setting. Use details from your setting imagery chart to help guide you through what your character might see, hear, smell, feel, or taste.

Step #4 What is the crime the main character needs to solve?

Step #5 Your main character will begin to look for clues to solve the crime.

Step #6 Your main character will be misdirected several times by one or more of the suspects.

Step #7 Watch your pacing. This is how fast or how slow the action in the story moves. You can slow the pacing down by adding descriptive details to the scenes.

Step #8 Many mysteries end with a twist ending. This is a surprising revelation. Some twists are foreshadowed. When the twist changes the reader's view of the preceding events, it is known as a surprise ending.



Remember to show, don't tell.



Story Planning Guides

Main Character's Name

Physical Appearance	Male or Female
Body Size and Shape	
Hair and Eye Color	
Hair Style	
Age	
Physical Characteristics	

Illustration

Important - Make sure the clothing matches the setting. If the story is set in the clothing must reflect this.

Plot

What crime does the main character need to solve?

Examples

- Thief
- Murder
- Witness a Crime
- Help Solve a Crime

Obstacles/Problems the Main Character Encounters/Cliffhangers at the End of Scenes

Examples

The main character could

- kidnapped
- injured
- trapped in a dangerous place

Culprit

- murder
- commits another crime

Suspects

Suspect's Name	Male or Female	Age
Body Size and Shape		
Hair and Eye Color		
Hair Style		
Physical Characteristics		
Clothing		
Personality Traits		
Culprit YES or NO		
If no, Way this Character is Going to Mislead the Reader		
Suspect's Name	Male or Female	Age
Personality Traits		
Culprit YES or NO		
If no, Way this Character is Going to Mislead the Reader		

Magnifying glass icon.

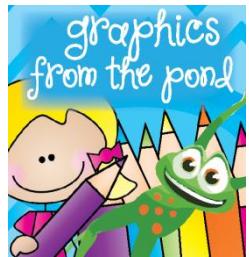
ES or NO going to Mislead the Reader

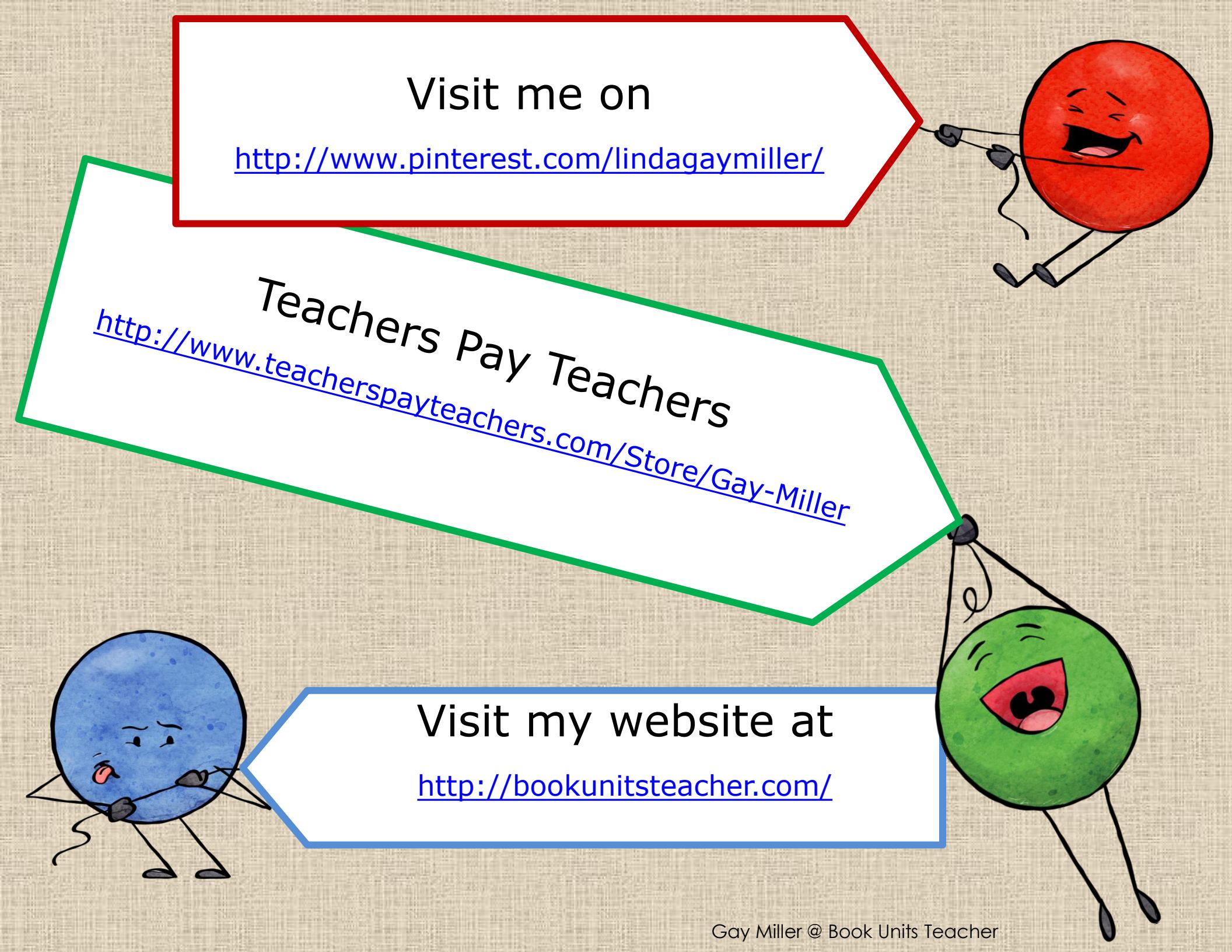
Resolution

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Credits





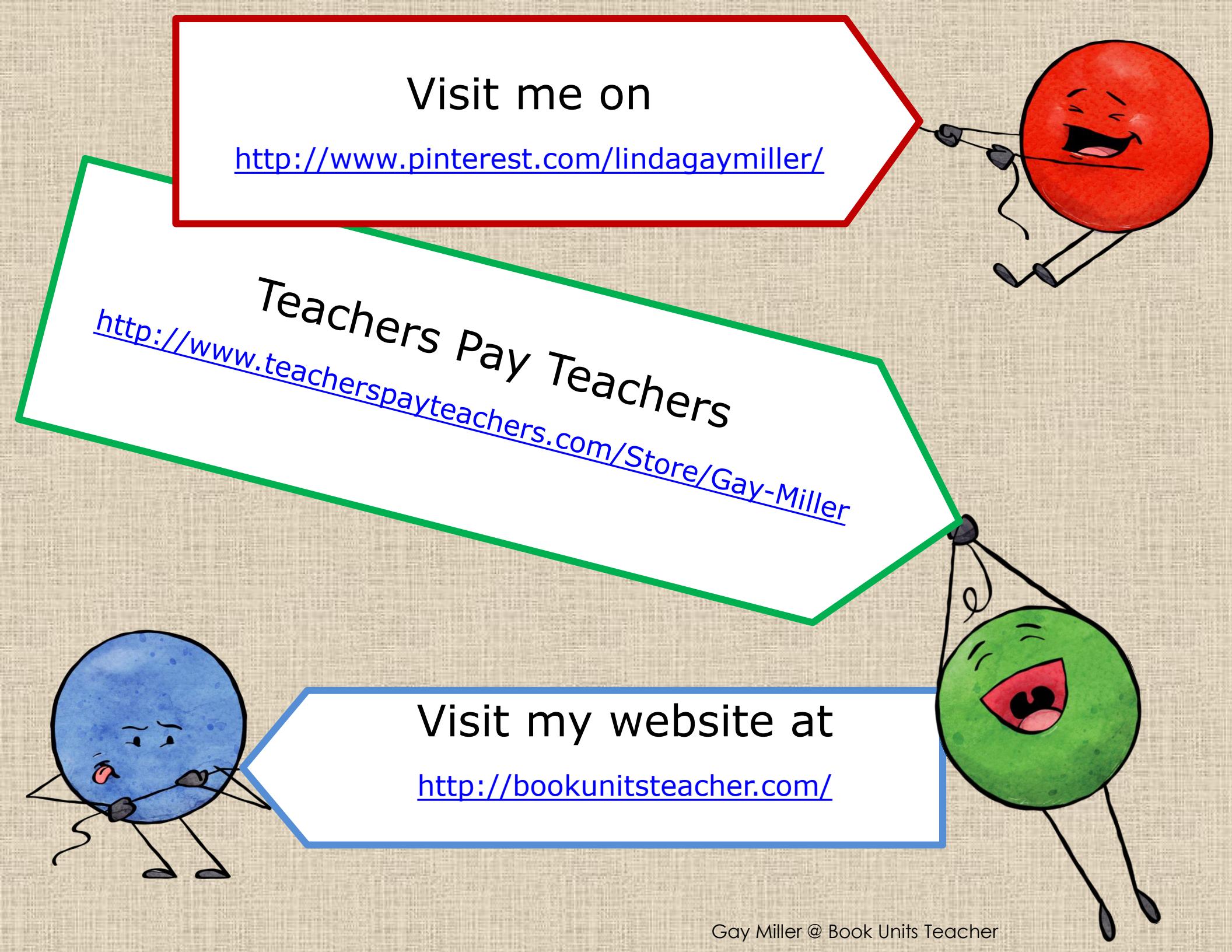
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