

Lesson 1: Welcome to Storyteller Con

UNIT: Storyteller Con

TRANSCRIPT

HOOK 1

Hi, it's Margaret. One time, I got to present at a convention called the Star Wars Celebration in Chicago. At the convention, I shared all about the new land that was going to open in Disneyland and Disney World called Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge.

Conventions are events tons of people can go to to learn more about a topic or participate in activities and workshops. I love going to conventions to see people in costumes and see everyone's creativity. There are conventions on all sorts of topics, like this juggling convention where the best jugglers from around the world share their skills with each other, or robotics conventions where people can learn about new technology. And even cake decorating conventions like this one where expert bakers learn from one another.

Maybe there's a convention for something that you're interested in.

DISCUSSION 1

Discuss: If you could go to a convention on any topic, what kind of convention would you want to go to?

HOOK 2

I don't know what you said, but I would want to go to an art convention where people can share their art or make something new while they're there. Recently, I heard about this convention called Storyteller Con. This convention celebrates short stories written by different authors. Participants at the convention can read stories, dress up as characters, and participate in fun activities.

The information on how to participate in Storyteller Con was just released on their website. This convention is unique because you don't have to go to Storyteller Con to participate—you can read the stories and do the activities from anywhere.

To participate in Storyteller Con, we'll be doing one of the convention's most popular activities: making literary fanzines. Fanzines are like miniature magazines that you make and publish yourself. Fanzines can be about any topic, but the fanzines at Storyteller Con are all about the short stories published at the convention. They're a great way to interact with the stories and share your ideas about the stories you read.

Take a look at this fanzine from last year's convention. You don't need to read all the words right now, but you might notice that the writer of this fanzine included a lot of things to make their fanzine look fun.

DISCUSSION 2

Discuss: What do you notice about this fanzine?

HOOK 3

Maybe you saw how they have illustrations and different sections of writing. Maybe you saw the author underline or put boxes around certain parts. You may have noticed other things too—and that's great!

Making fanzines is the most popular activity at Storyteller Con because they bring authors and readers together. Readers can respond to stories and share their ideas about a story with others. Plus, it's really fun to craft, design, and write your very own fanzine.

To learn a bit more about how to make fanzines, I found two fanzines from last year's Storyteller Con. Both fanzines were written about this story called "Marco's Hat." Each fanzine finds a theme or a life lesson in a story.

This fanzine was all about how the story teaches people that objects can be really important to people. This one is about how the same story teaches people to stand up for what's important to you. It's amazing to see how two readers of the same story found completely different themes in the story.

To learn even more about the kind of writing that goes into these fanzines, you can take a closer look at the two fanzines from last year's convention. You'll find what writing elements go into making a strong literary fanzine. Then, in the next lessons, you can start making your very own.

I'll get you started, step by step.

STEP 1

In today's lesson, you'll need someone to share ideas with. This could be a partner or someone you sit near. When everyone knows who their talk partner is, move on to the next step.

STEP 2

Get your supplies.

STEP 3

Before you read the fanzines, you'll need to read the story first.

Get your copy of "Marco's Hat." If you'd like to read the story on your own, you can pause the video now, or you can keep watching to hear me read the story aloud.

Follow along in your copy of "Marco's Hat."

Marco's Hat

By Helena Robinson

Marco loved to play outside with his dad. Sometimes they would go hiking, to the park, or ride bikes around town. No matter where they went, Marco's dad always put on his hat before going outside. The hat was a pink cap that had a picture of a fish on it. The hat used to be purple, but it was so old and worn that it had faded to pink. Even though it was an old hat, Marco loved seeing his dad put on the hat because that meant they were going to play outside. Whenever the hat came out, fun was sure to follow.

The day Marco's dad left for a long trip he gave Marco the hat.

"Take care of this for me while I'm away," Marco's dad said.

"I don't want you to go," Marco said, holding on to his dad's arm.

"I know it's hard to be away," his dad replied, "but every time you're missing me, you can wear my hat, and it'll be like I'm right beside you. Just make sure you take good care of it."

"I will," Marco said and he put on the hat. The hat was much too big on him, and it slid down over his eyes and ears. Marco's dad chuckled and gave Marco a big hug. Marco hugged him back and held on tight. As Marco's dad drove away, Marco held the hat tightly in his hands.

The next day at school, Marco proudly wore his dad's hat to school.

"What is that?" Marco's classmates said.

"A pink hat?"

"With a fish?"

Marco took the hat off his head and looked at it. Sure, it was an old pink hat with a fish on it, but Marco loved it just the same.

"Yeah, I don't know why I wore this," he lied, "it's pretty dumb." Marco's classmates laughed, and Marco tried to laugh with them. Holding the hat tightly, he walked over to his backpack. He put the hat inside his backpack and carefully zipped it up.

"It's OK, Dad," he thought. "I'll take care of it for you."

All day long he thought about the hat in his backpack. In math class, he was distracted as he ran his fingers through his hair. At recess, he didn't want to play any games because the sun felt extra hot on his head. During writing class, he asked to go to the bathroom so he could check his backpack to make sure the hat was still there.

On the walk home from school, Marco was dragging his feet. He felt bad about what he said about the hat. He didn't think it was dumb at all. Checking to make sure no one was around, he got the hat out of his backpack. It was crumpled into a little ball at the bottom of his backpack. Marco did his best to smooth the wrinkles out of it. He put it on, and a big grin spread across his face. He skipped the rest of the way home.

The next morning, Marco hugged his mom goodbye. His dad wasn't there to hug, so he grabbed the hat instead and put it on. Filled with energy, Marco bounded out the door.

Marco walked a few blocks towards school. Up ahead, he could see other students at the crosswalk on their way to school. Marco paused. A chorus of mocking voices

swirled in his memory. What is that? A pink hat? With a fish? He set his backpack down, took off the hat, and started to put it in his backpack.

“It’s OK Dad,” he thought, “I’ll take care of it.” Marco felt his heart heavy in his chest. He felt like he was zipping his family away in a backpack. He thought about what his dad would think of the hat being hidden all day. Standing over his open backpack, Marco suddenly felt determined. He grabbed the hat with both hands and pulled it out of his backpack. Jamming it onto his head, he marched to school with a plan.

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At school, Marco’s classmates pointed at his hat and whispered to each other. He ignored them and found his desk.

“It’s your turn for show and tell, Marco,” his teacher said, “did you bring anything today?”

“Yep!” Marco said, and walked to the front of the class. Nervous yet determined, he took the hat off his head and held it up for everyone to see. He heard some of his classmates whispering and giggling. His heart was pounding as he looked down at the hat. Immediately, he felt calmer. It was like his dad was standing right next to him.

“This is my dad’s favorite hat.” Marco began. The whispering and giggling continued.

“He got it on a fishing trip with his friends. He doesn’t like fishing, but he kept it to

remember all the fun times he had with his friends. Now he wears it when we go outside together, and it reminds me of all the fun we have together, too.” The more Marco spoke, the more confident he became. The whispering and the giggling stopped, as Marco’s classmates listened to the story of the hat. “I know it doesn’t fit me very well,” he added, “but even if it’s old and silly looking, it’s really important to me. It keeps my dad close when he’s away.” At the end of show and tell, a few of his classmates raised their hands.

“This keychain reminds me of my cat at home,” one of his classmates shared.

“My grandma gave me these socks!” another said.

“The sticker on my water bottle reminds me of my friend who moved away,” another classmate shared. Marco beamed.

The next day, Marco wore the hat out of the house. He wore it down the street. He wore it at the crosswalk, and all the way to class.

“Cool hat,” Marco’s classmates said.

“Looks fun!”

“Love the fish!”

“Thanks,” Marco replied.

Other kids at school still giggled at the hat, or whispered when he walked by, but Marco held his head high. In math class, Marco set the hat on his desk and finished the pages in his workbook extra quickly. At recess, he played soccer and scored two goals while wearing the hat. During writing class, he placed the hat on the back of his chair and wrote an entire story about a fishing trip.

When Marco got home, his dad had returned from his trip. Marco gave him a huge hug.

“Here’s your hat, Dad.” Marco said, “I kept it safe for you.”

“Thank you!” Marco’s dad said, putting the hat on. Marco smiled, proud of himself for taking care of the hat as he promised. At the same time, he was going to miss having the hat at school.

“Uh, Dad?” Marco asked nervously.

“Yes?” His dad replied.

“Do you think I could keep bringing the hat to school? I really liked having it with me and sharing it with my class.”

“You know what?” his dad said, as he pulled out a small package from his suitcase. “I can do you one better.” And he handed Marco a small gift.

It was a purple hat with a fish on it. It fit just right.

STEP 4

Now that you’ve read the story from last year, let’s check out some of the fanzines that were made about this story.

Get your fanzines.

Decide which partner will read Fanzine A and which partner will read Fanzine B.

STEP 5

Take a few minutes to read your fanzine quietly to yourself.

STEP 6

Share it with your partner. What was your fanzine about?

STEP 7

Even though every fanzine is different, they all have some similar parts. Every fanzine has an introduction. On your fanzine, find the first paragraph. Draw a bracket on the side of that paragraph and label it “introduction,” like this.

STEP 8

Every fanzine also has a conclusion. Find the last paragraph in your fanzine. Draw a bracket and label this paragraph "conclusion."

STEP 9

The paragraphs in the middle are called body paragraphs. Draw brackets and label the two body paragraphs in your fanzine, like this.

STEP 10

All the fanzines at Storyteller Con have a structure, just like this. But there's even more we can find.

Each fanzine is all about a theme or a life lesson that the fanzine writer saw in the story.

Choose which highlighter color you would like to use to highlight the theme. At the bottom of your worksheet, color in the box that says, "Theme" with the color you picked. We use purple, but it's okay if you're using a different color.

STEP 11

Look closely in the introduction paragraph. The writers of these fanzines put a wavy line underneath the theme that they wrote about. Highlight the theme in your theme color.

STEP 12

In the introduction, the theme is part of a longer sentence. Use your pencil to put a box around the entire sentence that has the theme in it.

STEP 13

The sentence you just put a box around is called a thesis statement. It is the sentence that the whole fanzine is all about.

Share with your partner the thesis statement from your fanzine.

STEP 14

You may have noticed the thesis statement isn't the same in different fanzines, and that's okay. Different people will see different themes in a story.

You already found the theme in the introduction, and you highlighted it. Now, look through the rest of your fanzine. See if you can find the theme in any of the other paragraphs. If you find the theme written in other parts of the fanzine, highlight it in your theme color.

STEP 15

You may have noticed that the theme is written again in the conclusion and in the body paragraphs, too. The theme is the most important part of a fanzine, so it comes up a lot.

Something else that every fanzine has is evidence from the story. Your other highlighter color will be your evidence color. At the bottom of your worksheet color in the box labeled "Evidence," in a different color of highlighter.

STEP 16

Evidence is the parts of the fanzine that appear in quotation marks, like this. The quotations show us that this part of the fanzine is actual words from the story.

Look through your fanzine. If you see any parts that are quotes from the story, highlight them in your evidence color.

STEP 17

Let's see if we can find where the fanzine writers got their evidence from. Pick two pieces of evidence from the body paragraphs that you highlighted. Look back at your copy of "Marco's Hat" to find those exact sentences. When you find them, highlight them in your evidence color.

WRAP UP

Amazing job, writers! You found some of the key components of fanzines at Storyteller Con. Every fanzine has a similar structure with an introduction, body paragraphs, and a conclusion. Fanzines also have a central thesis statement about a theme that comes up all throughout the fanzine. They also use lots of evidence from the story to support the thesis statement.

The type of writing in these fanzines has a special name—they are also called literary essays. In these essays, the writers are sharing the themes that they found in a story. Now that you have an idea of the kind of writing that goes into a fanzine, you're better prepared to make your own.

In the next lesson, you'll read the story for this year's convention and start making a plan for how your fanzine will go. I'll see you next time!