Lesson 1: Chester Breaks Free

UNIT: Where's Chester?

TRANSCRIPT

HOOK 1

Hi, writers. It's Anne.

I don't know about you, but I love reading stories that are part of a book series. A book series is a group of books that are connected. They usually feature the same characters or world, and each book tells a new adventure or story. Many include artwork or illustrations that help bring the characters and worlds to life.

DISCUSSION 1

Discuss: What is a book series that you enjoy or would like to read?

HOOK 2

I don't know what you said, but when I was younger, I absolutely loved *Encyclopedia Brown*.

Each story dropped me into Idaville, where boy detective Leroy Brown solved tricky mysteries with surprising twists. I loved trying to figure out the clues before he did—every new adventure felt like a puzzle waiting just for me.

Whenever I discover a new series that I like, I always wonder, how does the writer decide what story to tell? How do they know what adventures to create?

I have a friend Natalie, who's an amazing writer and artist. She's currently working on creating a brand new story series. She told me that she finds inspiration for her stories from almost anywhere. But for her latest one, it all started when she watched this.

Wow! Those little guys are amazing.

Natalie told me that after watching those videos, she was inspired to write a story about a hamster who lives in a classroom and loves to escape and go on amazing adventures. Each adventure would be part of a new series called *Where's Chester? Adventures of an Escaping Hamster.* And every story in the series would be written by a different author. One of those stories can be written by you.

Natalie is writing a story too, and she's already started brainstorming story ideas for the beginning, middle, and end of her story.

Natalie said that brainstorming can be tricky for her. Sometimes she'll have lots of ideas and sometimes none at all.

She's realized that the most important thing is to give yourself enough time to think and explore, and don't worry about getting it perfect right away.

Thinking about her main character, Natalie came up with Chester, a determined and curious hamster who lives in a classroom. He's brave and always eager to explore beyond his cage.

Natalie knows the setting of her story will be the school where Chester lives, And that Chester somehow escapes from his cage, but she still needs to figure out what will happen next.

Today, working alongside Natalie, you get to figure out what happens next in your own amazing short story about Chester.

Natalie wants new writers like you to each write an adventure for the series. You'll choose which school locations to use, brainstorm ideas, and then write a full story with a beginning, middle, and end.

Once your story is complete, it will then become part of Natalie's *Where's Chester? Adventures of an Escaping Hamster* series.

I'll get you started, step by step.

STEP 1

Get your supplies.

STEP 2

Get your School Location worksheet.

When writers brainstorm ideas for new stories, it's all about taking the time to think about the character, the setting, and then coming up with ideas for what could happen next.

These are the school locations that you can use for Chester's story. For now, let's read the descriptions. You'll decide which location you want to use for your story later on. If you'd like to read it on your own, pause the video now, or keep playing to hear me read it aloud.

Music Room
A room filled with instruments, music stands and chairs where students sing, play and learn music.

Cafeteria

A room filled with food, trays, and tables where students eat lunch and talk with friends.

School Playground
An outdoor area with swings, slides and space to run, where students play games and laugh with friends.

STEP 3

On your School Locations worksheet, choose two locations that you might want to use for your story. You'll use these to brainstorm a story idea for each location.

Circle the two locations you want to brainstorm ideas for.

STEP 4

Get your Story Ideas worksheet.

Find "Location 1". Write the name of the first location that you chose.

STEP 5

All stories have a beginning, a middle, and an end. We already know that Chester escapes his cage, but think about why would he want to do that.

Why did he escape and go to the location that you chose? Maybe he wants to visit a new place in order to try something he's always wanted to do, or he wishes he had a friend and sets off to find one.

When you have your idea for what Chester wants, write it here. You can write in sentences or just jot down some quick notes.

STEP 6

The middle of a story is where most of the action happens. It's usually where the main character runs into an obstacle or problem keeping them from what they want.

Natalie likes to get her ideas by first thinking about the location or setting and then watching videos that show fun or surprising problems.

Maybe Chester is trying to go somewhere, but there is something blocking him. Or it's too high up or far away. Or Chester needs to travel over something that is very challenging.

Find the middle box of your first location. Write at least one idea for an obstacle that could get in Chester's way.

STEP 7

The endings of stories usually resolve or fix the problem for the main character. Maybe Chester uses something unusual or surprising or Chester uses his body in a crazy way.

Find the ending box of your first location.

Write at least one idea for how Chester could solve the problem that he faces.

STEP 8

Read your Story Ideas for your first location.

Double check to make sure you have something that Chester *wants*, an *obstacle* he faces and his *solution* to the problem.

If you want, you can make changes to any of your ideas.

STEP 9

Nice job! You now have story ideas for your first location.

Remember, right now you're just brainstorming. Later, you'll choose which ideas you like best.

Find "Location 2" on your Story Ideas worksheet. Write the name of the second location that you circled on your School Locations worksheet.

STEP 10

Using what you know about Chester, the locations that you chose, and ideas from the videos that you watched, write story ideas for your second location. Make sure to include what Chester wants, an obstacle or problem he must face, and a solution to it.

Your teacher will tell you how long you have to brainstorm.

STEP 11

These papers are your V.I.P.s—very important papers. Your teacher will tell you where to put them so you will have them for the next lesson.

WRAP UP

Amazing job, writers! You now have great story ideas for both of your locations.

It's okay if you're not totally sure about all the parts of your story. You can always add more to it or make changes later on.

Right now, you're here in the writing process. In the next lesson, you'll choose the location and ideas that you like best, and then make a plan for your short story.

You'll then draft your story, revise and edit it, and finally, combine it with your classmates' stories to create the brand new series called, *Where's Chester? Adventures of an Escaping Hamster.*

I'll see you next time.