

Kansas City Young Audiences

Teacher Program Guide

One Dark and Stormy Night

Artist: Susan Clymer

Workshop Description

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Contact KCYA for more information on this and other programs.

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Susan Clymer will lead students in this week-long adventure of writing short stories. A published author of numerous books for children, Susan has developed a fail-proof method of engaging students in the discovery of their creative selves. Each residency may be designed to fit a school's academic or artistic needs, but most will follow this basic format:

On the first day, Susan will introduce herself as an author. She first guides the class through the creation of the beginning of a story; then each student writes their own ending to the story.

The second day, Susan demonstrates to the students how to get ideas for a story. In this segment, parts of a story are introduced as each student writes a story empha-

sizing a favorite activity.

On the third day *Show, Don't Tell*, students participate in an acting exercise which emphasizes descriptive verbs and the importance of observation.

Students write again on the fourth day, usually a realistic story.

The last day of the program involves writing the adventure story. Each child brings a precious item from home to share with the class, and then writes a story about it.

Susan and the students evaluate their work together. Most students end up with a story that displays their best writing abilities and thus may be put in their permanent portfolio.

Educational Objectives and Standards

Students will:

- Have the experience of becoming an author for a week
- Increase their comfort level in writing
- Experience the joy of being creative

Language Arts:

- Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process
- Used the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing

Special REQUIREMENTS:

During this 5-day residency, Susan meets with four classes per day. These same classes meet with Susan every day of the residency.

Artist Bio: Susan Clymer

Susan Clymer is the author of 11 books published by Scholastic Press, including *Scrawny, the Classroom Duck* and *Nine Lives of Adventure Cat*. Susan received her Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology from the University of California-Berkeley.

As a teaching artist for Kansas City Young Audiences, Susan conducts creative writing workshops and professional development seminars for

teachers. Over the last 15 years, she has taught more than 100 successful residencies for students in kindergarten through ninth grade.

Susan is an instructor for the University of Missouri-Kansas City Continuing Education program and a presenter for the National Science Convention on connecting science and writing in the classroom.



Susan Clymer

Vocabulary

Antagonist: The principal character in opposition to the protagonist or hero of a narrative or drama.

Character: A person portrayed in an artistic piece, such as a drama or novel.

Conflict: Opposition between characters or forces in a work of drama or fiction, especially opposition that motivates or shapes the action of the plot.

Motivation: The psychological feature that arouses an organism to action toward a desired goal; the reason for the action; that which gives purpose and direction to behavior.

Protagonist: The main character in a drama or other literary work.

Resolution: The solution to the conflict.

Short story: a prose narrative shorter than a novel.

List of Resources

BOOKS

There's a Hamster in My Lunchbox (Little Apple) by Susan Clymer, Peter Casale, Paul Casale
Scholastic (November 1, 1994)
ISBN: 0590481207



A collection of books authored by Susan Clymer

Post-Workshop Activities

1. Continue writing short stories using the techniques learned in this residency.
2. Exam ancient history and find a story about a legend (e.g., King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.) Write a short story about something you might experience in school using these characters to tell about it. For example, how would Lancelot, whose character is based on truth and valor,

3. Try creating emotion in a short sentence using sensory perception. Brainstorm methods used to create suspense: characters working against a deadline; conflict; readers knowing more than the characters; characters experiencing moments of doubt or confusion; slowing down the moment when the

main character is in doubt; using sensory details to create an air of mystery; adding an element of surprise.