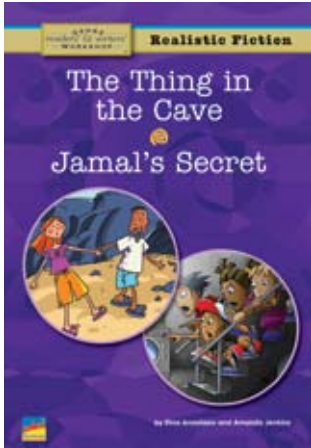


Identify Problems and Solutions in a Story



Mentor Text

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:

- Listen to an interactive realistic fiction read aloud to learn that in realistic fiction a conflict cannot usually be stated through only one sentence or paragraph, and that the solution to a problem cannot usually be stated through only one sentence or paragraph.
- Identify sentences and paragraphs in the text that state problems and solutions in a realistic fiction story.

Preparation

Materials Needed

- Mentor text: “The Thing in the Cave”
- Chart paper and markers
- Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation

If your class includes English learners, you may wish to prepare sample sentence frames to help them identify problems and solutions in the text.



1. Focus

Explain Genre Features

Say: *In every realistic fiction story, the writer introduces you to the characters and then tells you about their problems, or conflicts. After that, the writer describes how the characters find solutions to their problems. It usually takes more than one sentence or paragraph to explain a problem and more than one sentence or paragraph to explain the solution to it. Today we are going to identify and analyze problems and solutions in a realistic fiction story.*

Model Identifying a Problem and a Solution

Read aloud (or reread) “The Thing in the Cave” through the second paragraph on page 7. Model how the author takes two paragraphs to fully explain Cai’s problem. Note: You may want to use the interactive whiteboard resources to display this page so that students may read along.

Say: *Cai’s main problem is described in two paragraphs. I have to read both paragraphs to fully understand what the problem is. He finally sums up the conflict in the last sentence of the second paragraph: “I certainly didn’t want to lose my only friend on the first day of summer vacation.” I know that when I read a realistic fiction story, I look for series of sentences like this that help me to understand the characters’ problems.*

Create a Class Anchor Chart of Problems and Solutions

Create a chart similar to the one below and model writing in a problem you found in the story. **Say:** *I can use a chart like this one to record Cai’s conflict that I read about on page 7. After reading the two paragraphs, I know that his conflict is that he’s worried about losing his dog.*

	Problems	Solutions
Cai	Cai needs to find his dog.	He goes to look for Tucker on the beach. Cai goes inside the cave with Linda and finds his dog.
Linda	Linda wants to go in the cave, but she is afraid of the dark. Linda thinks there may be monsters in the cave.	Cai reassures her there are no monsters and takes her hand to lead her in.

Sample Problems-and-Solutions Anchor Chart



2. Rehearse

Practice Identifying Problems and Solutions

Continue reading the text. After reading, pages 10 and 11, ask students to identify the problem Linda has and how it's resolved. Discuss how the author provides back-and-forth dialogue between Linda and Cai and includes Cai's thoughts about Linda's problem over the two pages of text. If necessary, reread the last three paragraphs on page 10 to show students how the author develops Linda's problem.

After reading pages 11 and 12, ask students to identify how Cai solves his main problem of losing Tucker. Point out that finding Tucker is described over the two pages, starting with Cai hearing a panting sound, recognizing it's Tucker, and then finally finding his dog.

Say: We don't know why Linda doesn't go into the cave right away until we read all of page 10 and find out she's scared to go in. We find out how the problem is solved through the paragraphs on pages 10 and 11 that describe how Cai takes her hand and leads her inside. We need to read all of page 11 and most of page 12 before we know how Cai solves the problem of his missing dog.

If your class includes English learners or other students who would benefit from vocabulary and oral language development to comprehend the narrative, use "Strategies to Support ELs."

Share Ideas

Ask partners to share with the class the problems they came up with for a realistic fiction story.



3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that realistic fiction stories have one or more problems that the characters have to solve. Writers develop their characters' problems throughout the story, and they show how their characters solve their problems.

Encourage students to take notes about the problems their characters will have to solve in their own realistic fiction stories. During student conferences, reinforce students' use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.



4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share their notes about the problems their characters will have to solve.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Model the meaning of the word **problem**. For example, begin writing on a piece of paper with a pencil and break the lead. *Say: I have a problem. My pencil broke.* Then model the meaning of the word **solution**. Use a sharpener to sharpen the pencil. *Say: I have a solution. I can sharpen my pencil.*

Intermediate and Advanced

Provide the following sentence frames on chart paper to support ELs as they talk about problems and solutions:

Linda's problem is _____.
Cai's problem is _____.
Cai helps Linda when he _____.
The solution to Cai's problem happens when _____.
An idea for a problem in a realistic fiction story is _____.

All Levels

If you have students whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates to help them understand the lesson focus: **problem/el problema; solution/la solución.**