

Create a Picture Book Holiday Tradition

(Grades 6-12, On-going project)

Learning Objectives

Students examine popular picture books featuring a Christmas tradition families can adopt to see how these activities contribute to a positive holiday experience. Students learn to:

- Find the theme of a text and analyze it throughout the story
- Compare and contrast two picture books
- Write a fictional story using effective techniques, appropriate details, and structured storylines
- Present a cohesive piece of writing that is appropriate for the activity and audience

Materials

- Holiday tradition picture/activity books:
 - *Kindness Elves*
 - *Elf on the Shelf*
 - *North Pole Ninjas*
 - *Christopher Pop-In-Kins*
 - *The Christmas Angel*
 - *The Donkey in the Living Room*
 - *The Doll Kind*
 - *Elf Pets: A Reindeer Tradition*
- Paper and illustrating supplies like markers, pastels, watercolors, or colored pencils

Lesson

Holiday picture books help kids learn about different aspects of Christmas. In recent years, the publishing industry has seen a trend in books that offer new holiday traditions with fun family activities as part of the storyline. In this lesson students examine the elements that make these books/activities successful as a means to create their own unique picture book that includes a tradition families can replicate.

Introduction (45 minutes):

1. Discuss holiday traditions the students in your class participate in at home, or did when they were younger. Did any of these ideas come from Christmas books or movies?
2. Give a brief overview of the picture/activity book examples you have.
3. Discuss picture book structure. Standard picture books are 32 pages long with about 24-28 pages for the actual story.
4. Each student chooses two picture books to compare. Students examine what the books have in common and what makes them appealing to children and adults. Students can create a diagram for these comparisons if desired.

Activity (Daily planning time over course of 1 week):

1. After discovering the elements of a successful holiday tradition picture book, students will create a picture book of their own using the paper and illustration supplies.
2. Each student's book can incorporate any element of Christmas, but must include a detailed description of an activity families can do at home after reading the book. This activity must be part of the storyline, not just listed at the end of the book.
3. Students begin by developing a tradition/activity.
4. Next students develop a story plot and characters.
5. Students write and submit a rough draft of the story for peer review with a partner.
6. Students revise their story if desired.
7. Students create a blank picture book with cover, title page, text pages, endpapers if desired, and a back cover.
8. Students complete each formatting element of the book by planning and writing/drawing in information.
9. Optional: Students can create actual models or examples needed to participate in the tradition like a doll or notes.

Reflection

Each student reads their book aloud to the class. Students comment on what works and potential concerns for each book/tradition. For example:

- How easy/difficult was the process of creating a new tradition and a picture book?
- How will each student's book contribute to a positive holiday experience?

Assessment

Evaluate each student's book for basic story elements like plot, dialogue, and character development. Additional evaluations include creativity, originality, and incorporation of the tradition into the storyline. An optional evaluation could include gathering children's opinions by asking each student to read their book to a group of elementary students then asking for feedback.