

Endings Lesson

Connection

Stress that the class learned about the importance of leads the last few days. In the beginning of the year they learned about middles because they are the most important. Today, they will begin to spend some time talking about endings.

Teaching Point

Authors do not end stories with THE END. They spend time thinking of an ending to match the story. Today the students will name different kinds of endings authors use. The ending we will be discussing today is not the last paragraph but the last line... the “clincher.”

Teaching

1. Show students the outline a 4th-grader wrote about a time she learned a lesson. (Overhead of page 2.)
2. Show the connection between the outline and the story a 4th-grader wrote. (Paragraphs show organization.)
3. Discuss how different the last line of a story can be.
4. Show the possible different “clinchers” the child brainstormed. (Overhead page 3)
5. Discuss the endings to avoid and endings that are overused. *The author is trying to think of an ending that is clever and unique. Some endings are used a lot – like the summary and the dream. If possible, the writer should avoid using them. I suggest that students avoid talking to the reader, but there are cases where it works. Find some clever uses and discuss why. (Samples included on overhead.)*

Active Engagement

Ask the students to discuss the endings in pairs or groups and decide on the best one. They should be able to explain why they like the ending and how it's a good fit for the story.

Link

As a part of style, authors search for an ending that shows their personality, ends the story in a satisfying way, and addresses the topic. Of course, if students panic and can't think of anything but “And that is a time when...” they should use it. However, it is only fair to point out that endings are important and interesting. If they have time, writers should spend time thinking of a good way to exit their stories in order to leave readers satisfied.

Extensions

1. Read stories from books or stories students have written up to the point of the ending. Ask students to form groups. Assign one group to write a summary ending, one a humorous ending, one a surprise, and so forth until all clinchers are assigned. Ask students to share. As a class, reach consensus on which ending they like the best. Also endings tie everything together to help readers discover themes.
2. Ask students to try writing several last lines for their stories. They shouldn't remove the ending they have. They should add one more line – a clincher – from the models.

Outline Plan – Learned something new

- 1 - I learned how to ride a bike when I was four.
- 2 - Dad lifted me onto the bike.
- 3 - I started moving the pedals.
- 4 - I rode slowly at first.
- 5 - I rode for a long time and then I decided to take a break for the day.

I learned how to ride a bike when I was four. I had just gotten my new bike. I really wanted to ride that bike! My dad came outside and said he was going to teach me how to ride the bike.

He lifted me onto the bike. He made sure I held on tight. I sat on the seat. My feet were on the pedals. The training wheels kept me from falling over. “Whee!” I said.

I started moving the pedals. I put my hands over the breaks so that I could stop. My dad was right beside me. He said, “I’m not going to let you fall.” He put his foot on the training wheel and his hand on my back and pushed me off. I rode out ahead of him.

I rode slowly at first. My dad was in back of me, panting because he was out of breath. The bike was wobbly. I was nervous. I pedaled a little faster and I rode a little faster. I was beginning to like riding a bike. It was getting easier as I rode down the street in front of my house. I suddenly realized my dad had stopped holding the bike. He watched me as I rode off on my own.

How would you end this story?

Sample endings Glue in your daybook!

surprise	<i>Even though I was very successful in learning to ride a bike, I never rode a bike again.</i>
humor	<i>Now that I think about how easily I learned to ride a bike, I think I'm ready for skiing!</i>
mystery	<i>I really don't know why I learned to ride that bike so quickly but I'm glad I did.</i>
summary	<i>I will always remember the time that I learned to ride a bike when I was 4 years old.</i>
moral	<i>That experience taught I could do new things. I learned that riding a bike is not as hard as it looks.</i>
question	<i>I'm wondering what else I will accomplish in my life now that I've learned to ride a bike.</i>
dialogue	<i>My dad said, "Wow! You sure are a quick learner!"</i>

Ending to avoid - talking to the reader.

Example:

Do you think you could ride a bike, too?

Or, Now you know about the time I learned to ride a bike.

Dreams and summaries are overused.

Example: The next thing I knew, I woke up in my bed. I never learned to ride a bike after all. (dream)

Example: And that is a time I learned to ride my bike. (summary)