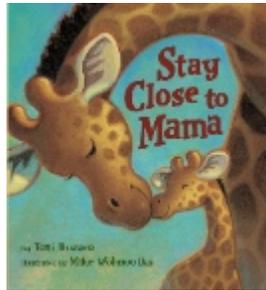


SIX TRAIT WRITING GUIDE



Stay Close to Mama

by Toni Buzzeo; illustrated by Mike Wohnoutka
Hyperion Books for Children, 2012

IDEAS: How Do Ideas Change?

Toni Buzzeo's original story was about a young giraffe who fell into a swimming pool in Kenya, Africa, and had to be rescued by the humans living at the wildlife ranch. It was based on a real event the author learned about on a trip to Kenya. But as students will see, there's no sign of a swimming pool in *Stay Close to Mama*. Share the author's original idea with students and ask them how it changed to become a part of this story of several dangerous adventures. (Clue: the swimming pool incident became the water hole scene.) Then challenge students to discuss why the author might have decided to revise her original story.

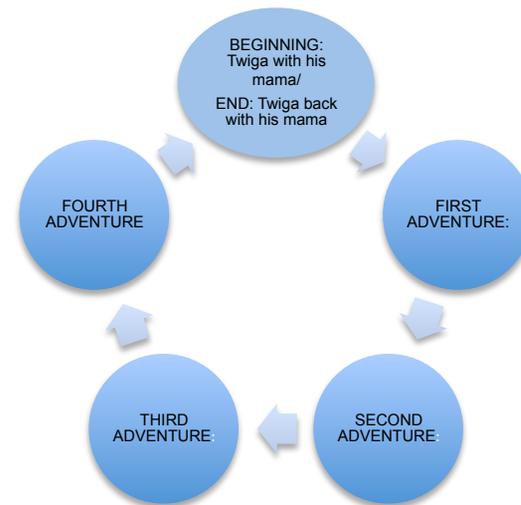
VOICE: How It Feels to Me

While the stinging ants, hyena, crocodile, and cheetah are portrayed as threats to Twiga in the book, each of them is an interesting animal in its own right, worth investigation. Share information about each of the other animals in the story with children. Once they are more familiar with each of the other animals in the story, ask them, individually or as a whole group, to write a scene, narrated by a chosen animal, in which that animal encounters Twiga.

ORGANIZATION: All Over Again

Much like the author's other circular story, *No T. Rex in the Library*, the reader suspects that there are other, similar adventures ahead for Twiga. Ask students which line at the end of the story tells them that Twiga has more adventures in store and Mama shouldn't be too sure he's by her side to stay.

Invite students to complete the following "circular story" graphic organizer, identifying and then adding each dangerous encounter in the story



SENTENCE FLUENCY: Three-Four-Five

Ask students if they can find a sequence of sentences in *Stay Close to Mama* that have the following pattern:

Three words

Four words

Five words

Do students find these sentences enjoyable to repeat aloud? Ask them why they think that is. Then, invite them to rewrite the three sentences in a more ordinary, conversational manner, using many more words. Is the they have created more or less fun to repeat aloud? Why?

WORD CHOICE: Interesting Verbs/Descriptive Adjectives

Author Toni Buzzeo employs two types of words to bring the setting and the action of *Stay Close to Mama* to life. She employs specific verbs and verb phrases to deliver the action of the story. Then, she uses specific adjectives to bring the setting and characters into clear focus.

Take your students on two successive tours of the story, scouting first for verbs (adding a star to those that are especially strong) and then for adjectives (again adding a star to especially well-chosen ones). Finally, invite your students to choose one strong verb and one or more especially descriptive adjectives and create a sentence of their own.

CONVENTIONS: Insert a Comma

Whenever Toni Buzzeo introduces a sentence with a prepositional phrase that refers to direction (such as "Up ahead, . . .") she follows the phrase with a comma. Re-read the story, searching for these phrases and create a list. Now, ask students to create a sentence of their own that begins with one of these phrases followed by a comma.