

Literature-Based Reading Activities — Third Edition

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Literary Report Card**O'Hare Private School**

Student: Peter

G—Good S—Satisfactory N—Needs to Improve

Areas	Grade	Comments
obedience	N	<i>He went to Mr. McGregor's garden even though his mother told him not to.</i>
bravery	N	<i>He cried a lot when he got caught in a net and when he couldn't find his way out of the garden.</i>
sports	G	<i>He ran fast, jumped into a bucket and out of a window, and wiggled under a fence.</i>

Any grade should be accepted as long as the child is able to provide a reason for the grade. In Example 4.7, some students may give Peter Rabbit an "S" or a "G" in bravery rather than an "N," stating that he was brave to go into McGregor's garden. It is important that the teacher not have correct answers in mind. Rather, he or she must look for reasonable, thoughtful responses and examine students' abilities to substantiate their claims.

It is important that all graded areas be stated in the positive form. It makes no sense to award a character an "A" in impatience, for example, or a "D" in dishonesty.

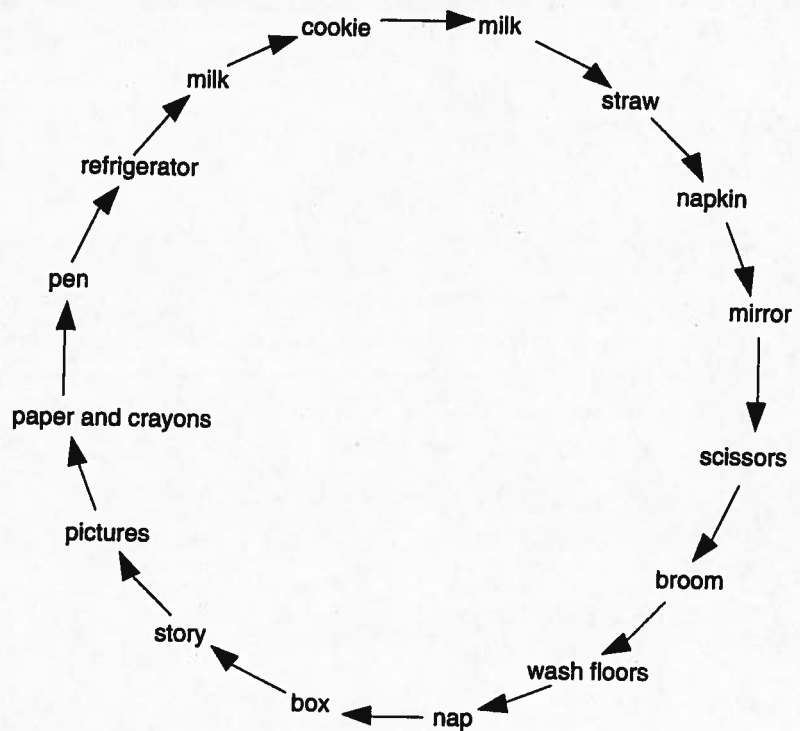
PLOT ORGANIZERS

Plot organizers provide a visual display of the events that occur in a story. They are useful for helping students summarize a plot and understand its organization, and they also can serve as a model for students' original work (see Chapter Five).

Two plot patterns that may be found in young children's books are the circular and the cumulative patterns. These can be depicted as shown in Examples 4.8 and 4.9

Example 4.8

- **Title:** *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*
- **Author:** Laura Joffe Numeroff
- **Grade Level:** K-2
- **Summary:** A young boy describes the cycle of events that could take place if you give a mouse a cookie.



Example 4.9

- **Title:** *This Is the House Where Jack Lives*
- **Author:** Joan Heilbroner
- **Grade Level:** K-2
- **Summary:** This cumulative story tells the consequences of the flooding caused by the overflowing bathtub in which Jack plays.

											Jack
										water	water
									lady	lady	lady
								cook	cook	cook	cook
							cat	cat	cat	cat	cat
					girl	girl	girl	girl	girl	girl	girl
				mop	mop	mop	mop	mop	mop	mop	mop
			man	man	man	man	man	man	man	man	man
		pail	pail	pail	pail	pail	pail	pail	pail	pail	pail
	boy	boy	boy	boy	boy	boy	boy	boy	boy	boy	boy
dog	dog	dog	dog	dog	dog	dog	dog	dog	dog	dog	dog
house	house	house	house	house	house	house	house	house	house	house	house

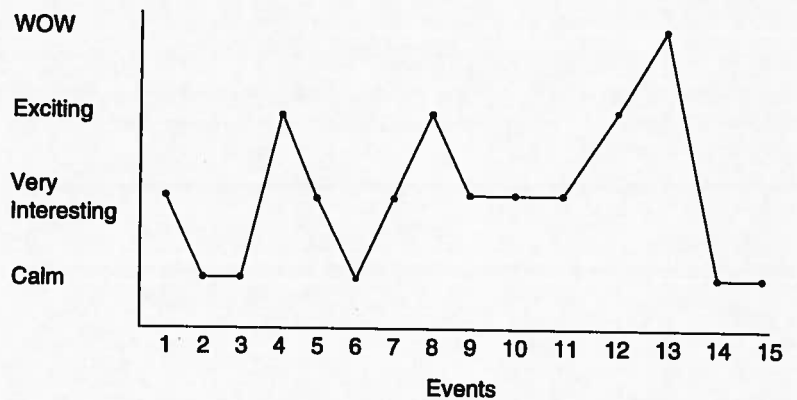
Some cumulative stories, such as *The Napping House*, by Audrey Wood, build to a point and then recede, first adding elements one at a time and then eliminating those elements one at a time until the story ends. This kind of plot structure could be displayed in a stair-step pattern that first rises and then falls. Stair-step organizers also may be used for countdown books such as *Five Little Ducks*, by Ian Beck, and *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed*, by Eileen Christelow. The stairs are positioned in descending order from left to right.

A plot profile (Johnson & Louis, 1987; see also DeGroff & Galda, 1992) is a more complex type of plot organizer. Students identify the main events in a story and then rate the events along some scale, such as excitement or impact on the character. Events are numbered, and these numbers are placed along a horizontal axis, as in Example 4.10. The rating for each event is plotted along the vertical axis. Lines are drawn between each point, thus creating a line graph. Johnson and Louis suggest that when students rate events in terms of their excitement, they use the following scale: "calm," "very interesting," "exciting," "WOW!"

Example 4.10

- **Title:** *Number the Stars*
- **Author:** Lois Lowry
- **Summary:** This is the story of one family's efforts to help save Danish Jews from the Nazis.

(continued)



Events

1. Running home from school, Ellen, Annemarie, and Kirsti are stopped by German soldiers.
2. Peter visits after curfew and tells the family that Germans are ordering stores run by Jews closed.
3. Ellen comes to stay with the Johansens when her parents flee.
4. The soldiers search the Johansen apartment for the Rosen family. They challenge Ellen because of her dark hair.
5. Mrs. Johansen, Annemarie, Ellen, and Kirsti travel to Uncle Henrik's.
6. The girls play at Uncle Henrik's.
7. "Aunt Bertie's" loved ones gather around her casket.
8. The soldiers interrupt the gathering.
9. Peter organizes the Jews to head to the boat.
10. Mrs. Johansen leaves with the Rosens.
11. Annemarie sees her mother on the ground and helps her to the house.
12. Annemarie races through the woods to deliver the envelope to Henrik.
13. Annemarie is stopped and questioned by soldiers. They discover the package.
14. Uncle Henrik explains the Resistance and the handkerchief to Annemarie.
15. The war ends. Annemarie learns the truth about Lise's death.

An alternative to a line graph is a cut-and-paste grid. Students write each event from the story on a separate piece of paper. These may be illustrated. Students then paste these sheets higher or lower on a large butcher paper grid, depending upon the ratings they give. The key events and ratings shown in the line graph in Example 4.10 are depicted in the cut-and-paste format in Example 4.11.

Children can work individually or they can collaborate in small groups on plot profiles, coming to consensus on story events and ratings. If other individuals or groups of students are reading the same book, plot profiles can be compared. Teachers should expect differences between individual or group selections of key events and ratings.

Example 4.11

WOW Exciting Interesting Calm			Annemarie is stopped and questioned by soldiers. They discover the package.		
	Running home from school, Ellen, Annemarie, and Kirsti are stopped by German soldiers.				
	Peter visits after curfew and tells the family that Germans are ordering stores run by Jews closed.		Uncle Henrik explains the Resistance and the handkerchief to Annemarie.	The war ends. Annemarie learns the truth about Lise's death.	
	1	2	13	14	15
	Events				

WORLD WHEELS

A world wheel may be used to help students organize information from books that present variations on experiences that people around the world share. For instance, in *Throw Your Tooth on the Roof*, by Selby B. Beeler, tooth traditions around the world are described. In Argentina, when young children lose a baby tooth, it is put into a glass of water. During the night, a little mouse drinks the water, takes the tooth, and leaves some coins or candy in the glass. In Costa Rica, the tooth is plated with gold and made into an earring. In *This Is the Way We Go to School*, by Edith Baer, readers meet children traveling to their respective schools in more than twenty locations throughout the world. Children are seen riding their bikes to school in China, taking the elevated rail transit in