



In My Home: A Handmade House Book with Student Writing

MINNESOTA WRITING PROJECT DEMONSTRATION

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Grade appropriate: Grades 3-5 (Could certainly be adapted to use with older students as well.)

Approximate length of time to complete lesson: 5 class periods

Objective (s) to be covered:

- To use bookmaking to inspire student writing.
- To introduce students to a non-traditional book structure that becomes a three dimensional piece for their text and images.
- To give experience with short personal narrative or poetry.
- To give students exposure to the challenge of page layout; how text and image work together with the page.

Specific standards addressed:

Minnesota standards for 3rd, 4th and 5th grades require that students compose a variety of pieces of writing. This book structure allows for short personal narrative, poetry or descriptive writing.

Brief summary/outline:

Session #1 Introducing the lesson and writing start-up.

Begin by reading a poem or narrative picture book that has the theme of home or house. Show students an example of the folded book structure they will be making.

Guide students through writing prompts around the theme of home (such as: things in a house, sounds in a house, people doing things in a house, then use these lists to trigger a personal memory from which to write). You can decide whether it will be narrative or poetry or student choice.

Session #2 Making the book structure

Materials: each student will need 1-12x18 piece of construction weight paper, a tongue depressor for creasing folds, scissors, ruler and pencil.

Guide students through the process of making the accordion fold house book.

Step 1: Fold the 12x18 paper in half the short way.

Demonstrate to students how to use a tongue depressor to crease the folds (hold on one long edge and use the other like a snow-plow working from the center of the fold out to the edge to crease the fold.)

Step 2: Bring one cut edge up to the folded edge, crease and repeat with the other side. The paper will now look like an M or W.

Step 3: Hold the folded paper as a vertical rectangle then cut the top two corners to create the roof slopes of your house book.

Step 4: Measure up 3” from the bottom edge marking where the next fold will be. Open the paper flat and fold up the long edge to form a 3” flap.

Step 5: Cut into the bottom edge of the book on the three folds and stop when your cut reaches the long fold you made in step 3. These three short cuts create 4 flaps that fold out from each “page” of your house book. They can be used for text or pop-outs (check your library books on making pop-outs)

Session #3 Considering how and where to put the text.

Step 1: Share with students some simple narrative picture book and look together at where the writer made page breaks, where the text is located on the page, and what style/size of text was used. There are lots of books that have interesting variations on how the text is incorporated with the images and how text may be altered to focus attention.

Step 2: Give students two sample texts (one poetry and the other prose) around the theme of home. In small groups have them look at their book structures and talk about where text could be placed in such a book and how and where would they incorporate drawings or images (page by page, along the diagonals of the roof edges, on the fold-out flaps, text or images flowing across all four pages, attached to pop-outs...). You can also have them consider whether the text would be hand-written (print or cursive), computer generated (what style and size of font), found text that is cut and pasted, should it be black pen, colored pencils, crayon...

You may want to create a form to be filled out that lists the items to be considered (page breaks, text location, text style/size, how pictures would be made and where pictures located). Or you could have them create a storyboard with picture sketches and cut and pasted text.

Have the groups share with the whole class what they decided and talk about how there are a lot of choices to consider and there is more than one way to design this kind of a book.

Now have students return to the writing that was begun on the first day. Have them re-read, revise, do peer editing with a partner or conference with you, the teacher.

Session #4 Finish writing, add text and image to book.

Materials: glue sticks, scissors and a variety of art materials (color pencils, markers, collage pictures from photos, old books or magazines, colored papers, wall paper, news paper text, found images...).

Do a quick mini-lesson on options for putting images into the house book. If doing pop-outs do a demo of that option and have them practice on scrap paper before cutting into the book.

You may want to direct your students to do drawings on other paper that will then be cut out and glued into their book or at least to do a draft version of their image before drawing directly onto the pages.

Review the process from session #3 when students worked as a group to do the book layout. Instruct them to do a similar process to plan their book layout using sketches, storyboard plan or mock-up of how they will organize text and image and what materials and style of text they will use.

With some degree of planning done, students will work independently on their books.

Session #5 Independent work continues

Begin this session by doing a whole class check-in. Sharing problems, seeking ideas from each other.

You may find that students will need another class period or two to complete this project. Be sure to include some final celebration/reading and sharing of the books.

These books can be opened up for display as a 3-D piece in the classroom or media center.

Assessment: Create rubrics for self and peer assessment evaluating such things as: expression of the theme in text and image, page layout, flow of text, visual interest, and craftsmanship.

Bookmaking Resources:

Cover to Cover

Shereen LaPlantz

ISBN 0-937274-81-X

The Essential Guide to Handmade Books

Gabrielle Fox

ISBN 1-58180-019-3

The Handmade Book

Angela James

ISBN 1-58017-256-3

The Art and Craft of Handmade Books

Shereen LaPlantz

ISBN 1-57990-180-8

The Pop-Up Book

Paul Jackson

ISBN 0-8050-2884-6

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