Come on Campfire

Learning objectives
• Review key ideas expressed during the process, build on other students’ ideas, and communicate your own ideas.
• Choose words, phrases, dialects, and punctuation that add expression and effect.
• Investigate how character and actions convey emotions.
• Describe a character, setting, or event in depth, drawing on specific details in the text.
• Create dialogue around experiences, events, and the characters’ responses to given situations.
• Distinguish between formal and informal language when speaking and writing.

Setting the scene
For many city children, visiting the countryside or sitting around a campfire is just a dream. In the city there are no exciting wild animals, and the city lights obscure the stars in the night sky. In the countryside, the sky has no limit, so to speak, and the nights are very dark. The stars shine brightly, and tiny creepy crawlies scuttle around in the darkness.

Imagine that you are with friends on a camping trip, lighting a campfire for the very first time. How will you set up camp? What will you be doing as night falls?

Building the story
Ask the students to build their very own campsite with a campfire.

• How will you depict the countryside?
• What could happen after nightfall?
• Will any wild animals come and visit? What sort of wild animals?

Reflecting
Have the students reflect and talk about each of their characters as they build. What are they doing? What are they saying? How do they feel?

• How do they react to the wildlife, and what animals do they encounter?
• Some people become frightened or homesick when camping, others can be so excited that they find it hard to sleep. What’s the situation around your campfire?
• What are the characters having to eat?
• How do they prepare and cook the food?
Sharing and documenting
Ask the students to use the StoryVisualizer software to portray the story and the communication between the campers. Have them tell their stories to an audience.

Suggestions for scripts:
Character 1: “Look at the stars . . . you can see the Milky Way!”
Character 2: “Did I ever tell you the story—my friend swears it is true—about the two campers and the phantom grizzly bear . . . ”
Character 3: “I love the peace and tranquility, just the crickets, the crackle of the fire, and the smell of toasted marshmallows . . . yummy!”
Character 4: “. . . and the buzzing of the mosquitoes and the growling of the hungry wolves . . . ”

Sample solution

Extending
• Write an amusing camp song. The verses should focus on the good and bad things about camping. Different characters can sing and act out the different verses.

• Organize camping weekends where you invite visitors to your special campsite. Is there enough space? What can you do to make the campsite cozy? Design an advertising brochure to publicize your campsite. Where will you market your message, and how?

• Research and write about an animal native to your campsite location. Work as a team; each person can focus on one characteristic that makes the animal special.

• Read a variety of fictional and nonfictional texts and make notes about how different authors describe the countryside.