Oh Woe and Horror

Learning objectives

• Read a text, then write a summary and read it aloud.
• Explain how scenes fit together to provide smooth transitions and how they form the fundamental structure of specific genres such as mystery, science fiction, and horror.
• Draw facts from literary texts to support analysis and reflection.
• Develop character analysis skills by describing a character, setting, or event in depth. Draw on specific details in the text.
• Compare and contrast themes, settings, and plots in different genres.
• Demonstrate an understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuance in word meanings.

Setting the scene

• Read a scary story, a science fiction story, or a horror story to the class.
• Discuss the key details of the story with the students.
• Talk about the traits and characteristics of the genre. Define the recognizable features of the genre.
• Which parts of the story conjure visual interpretation? What makes the story flow?

Building the story

Ask the students to work in teams. Have them brainstorm ideas and then create a storyboard for a three- or five-scene story. Start with “I’ll never forget that grim, dark day when I suddenly experienced . . .”

Here are some key scene suggestions:
• The feeling of something supernatural entering the scene . . .
• Strange sounds and noises coming from the . . . What are they?
• The room suddenly becoming cold, and the feeling of not being alone . . .
• The never-ending noise coming from the window . . .

Reflecting

These suggestions are designed to spark and encourage reflection:

• How are you identifying the characteristics of each genre, and what are they?
• What would your single favorite scene be? What does that scene tell us?
• What would come before and after your favorite scene?
Sharing and documenting
Ask the students to focus on genres such as horror, science fiction, and dark fantasy, with particular focus on character analysis when writing their summaries.

Extending
• Attach the setting card to the spinner and spin it to determine a change of setting. How can the scene structures be changed to fit the new setting? What effect will that have on the story’s existing characters?

• Use the StoryVisualizer software to create a police report about an unexpected and very scary event. Read the report aloud to the class and answer any questions.

• Imagine that you are a detective. You have been hired to solve a great mystery. Write a report that includes the following:
  - An analysis of the current situation.
  - A description of evidence and clues.
  - A description of events, characters, and the scene from a detective’s point of view.