

Conceived by PETER GUTIÉRREZ (NCTE Spokesperson on Graphic Novels) and SARI WILSON (Teaching Artist, Teachers & Writers Collaborative)



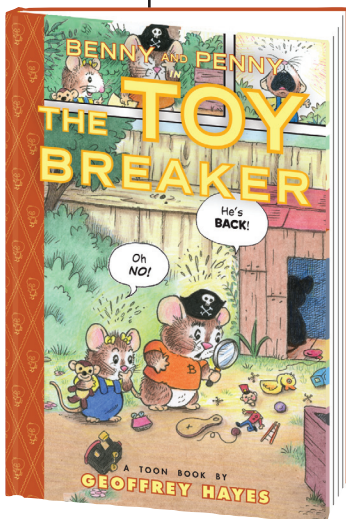
Lesson Plan for
Benny and Penny in
THE TOY BREAKER

by Geoffrey Hayes



DOWNLOADABLE FROM **TOON-BOOKS.COM**
WRITING NONFICTION NARRATIVES

Overview	Graphic novels such as <i>The Toy Breaker</i> represent an optimal way to learn the building blocks of narrative structure, distinguish them from story details, and enhance visual literacy at the same time. Using the book as a model, students can develop a personal narrative with an ordered sequence of events per Common Core Standards.
Subject	English Language Arts
Grade Level	1-2
Suggested Time	60 minutes
Objectives	Students will hone prewriting skills by recounting and sequencing events and using temporal transition words in the process. They will build on their grasp of story structure to create a personal narrative in the graphic format that will then serve as the basis for an oral presentation.
Before Reading	Prior to class, reproduce multiple copies of the activity sheet if you wish to have students use it for more than one stage of the writing process (see below). Start the lesson by reviewing the concepts of “beginning, middle, and end” by having students sort the events in a real-life anecdote (a brief incident) into each category. Point out that good nonfiction narratives typically have beginnings that introduce a challenge or problem, a middle section in which people take action in response to it, and an ending that provides a successful, or unsuccessful, resolution. Call attention to how we use temporal transition words (<i>next, finally</i>) when recounting anecdotes, and how they help listeners/readers understand the order of events. Have students brainstorm for such words, and list them on the board.
During Reading	Read <i>The Toy Breaker</i> aloud to students. Pause once or twice to have students reflect and share incidents from their lives that are similar to the story’s events: <i>Were other kids ever hesitant to let you play? Have you ever broken a toy or had a toy broken?</i> Also be sure to explain the formal elements of comics as needed and how they’re used to convey certain types of information: panels, word balloons, sound effects, thought bubbles, etc. Ask students how transition words that indicate sequential or chronological order (then, later) help readers follow events in any story, whether in prose, comics, or delivered orally. Please note that while <i>The Toy Breaker</i> does not feature caption boxes, a device with which students may be familiar, it does make effective use of temporal words within word balloons (e.g., pp. 16 and 20).



(Continued overleaf)

Benny and Penny in
THE TOY BREAKER

(TOON Books/Candlewick Press,
ISBN: 978-1-935179-07-8, \$12.95)

For more information on the TOON Books, check:
WWW.TOON-BOOKS.COM

THE TOY BREAKER LESSON PLAN (PAGE 2)

After Reading	<p>Revisit the 3-panel sequence on p. 25. Ask students to describe the problem in the first panel (<i>Bo is stuck in the fence</i>), the actions taken in response (<i>Benny and Penny pull him, Melina pushes him</i>), and the ending that resolves it (<i>Bo is freed</i>). Discuss how this basic model of three key actions or scenes can be used for other incidents, even much more involved ones. Then invite students to summarize verbally <i>The Toy Breaker's</i> plot in three panels that signal a beginning, middle, and end. (Possible response: <i>Bo steals Penny's monkey; Monkey rips; Bo apologizes to Penny.</i>) Then, perhaps in small discussion groups, encourage students to respond to the story by recalling similar incidents in their lives, guiding them to choose incidents with minimal complexity. (Examples: <i>bully does something mean, teacher is told, bullying ends; toy breaks, Dad fixes, toy can be played with again.</i>) Consider modeling the following format for them: "One time, I _____. THEN _____. LATER _____." Prompt volunteers to use these or other transition words gathered during pre-reading as they briefly summarize their anecdotes to the group in three distinct stages. Stress that the goal is to capture an incident's main points, not all its narrative details.</p> <p>Distribute the activity sheet, clarifying that the boxes are comics panels. Inside the Beginning, Middle, and End panels, students should depict the corresponding sections of their personal narratives. Tell students that they will make comic strips that serve as both illustrations of their anecdotes and visual prompts for more detailed oral presentations of them.</p> <p>Explain that cartoonists generally create comics in three stages. "Breakdowns" are so named because they break down a story into its basic visuals much like an outline does during pre-writing. Essential for spatial planning, they help creators block out the placement of important figures and objects in each panel to ensure that there is adequate space for word balloons and other text fields. (Sound effects—see <i>The Toy Breaker</i> pp. 14, 20, 25—are quite popular with young writers.) Model this practice with stick figures, and then have students sketch their own breakdowns on the activity sheet (if you opted to print multiple copies for each student) or as "thumbnails" on scrap paper. Text can be drafted at this point, added directly into the breakdowns to see if it fits. The pencil stage fleshes out these rough sketches into detailed drawings and includes the lettering of text into balloons, bubbles, and captions; if errors are made, they can still be erased and corrected. At the final stage, penciled art and text is made permanent. You can photocopy the pencils so that the original is preserved, with students applying ink and color as a form of publishing, or have them trace over their original pencils directly.</p> <p>Finally, have students narrate their comic strips orally. Coach them to provide background for their anecdote and to clarify the strip details in a panel-by-panel manner, including transition words where appropriate.</p>
Extension/ Assessment (Optional)	<p>As an alternative comics creation and publishing option, introduce students to the "Fun for Kids!" section on TOON Books' Web site: http://toon-books.com/fun.php. This section hosts many easy-to-use resources and students can create their own visual narratives. Invite them to develop original 3-panel comic strip using characters and details from the Benny and Penny series by visiting the "carTOON Maker Comics Lab". You can use the work students produce to assess their fluency with the elements of visual narrative.</p>



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THE TOY BREAKER ACTIVITY SHEET
CREATE YOUR OWN COMIC: "It Really Happened To Me!"

Name _____

Date _____

- Draft: (Check One) "Breakdowns"
 Pencil Sketch/First Draft
 Final Version

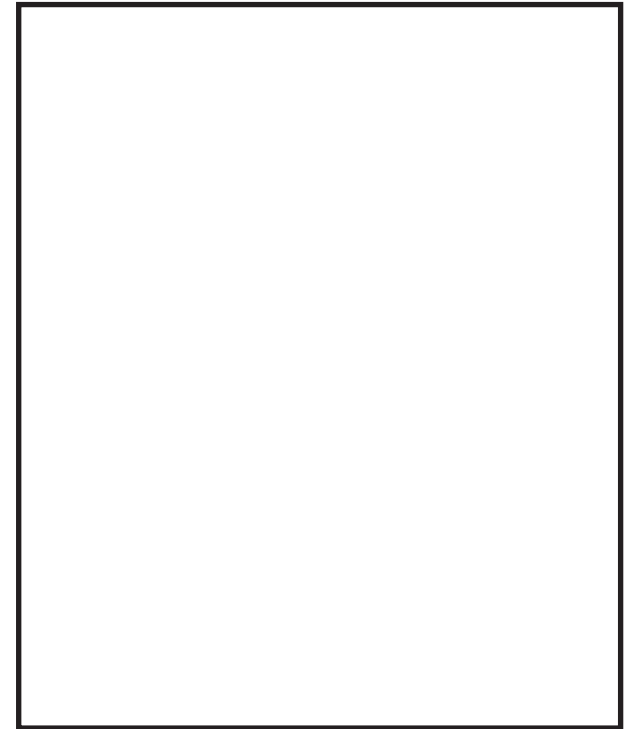
Plan or draw your comic in beginning-middle-end order. TIP: Write your words first, then draw word balloons around them!

Title of My Real-Life Story: “ _____ ”

BEGINNING

MIDDLE

END



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