



THEME

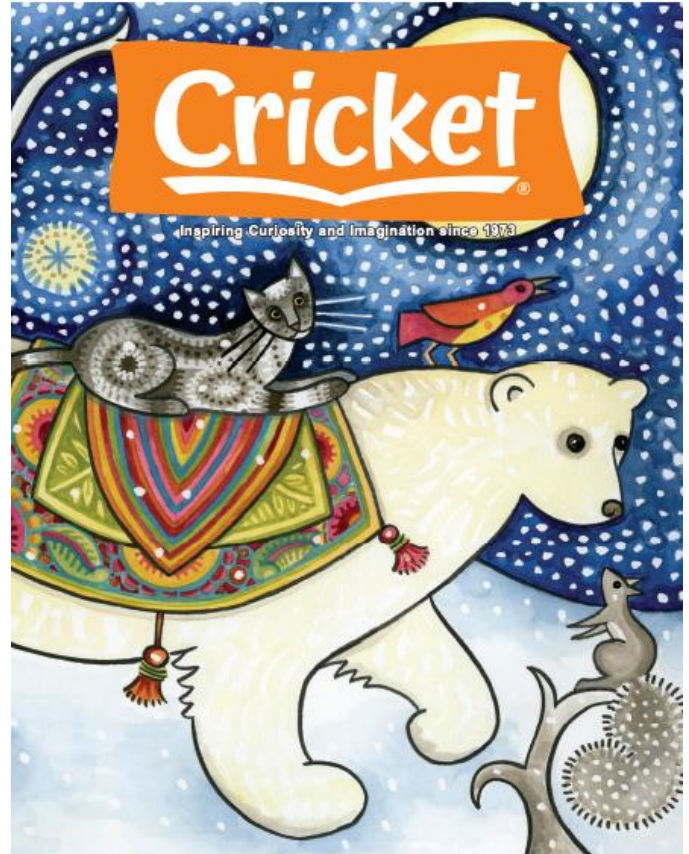
In this issue of Cricket, stories end in new friendships, new responsibilities, and hard-earned happiness. Use the minilessons in this teacher guide to reinforce language arts skills and engage students in a variety of learning activities as you explore story endings.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

What makes a good story ending?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will write narratives to develop imagined events.
- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will identify themes.
- Students will analyze how different texts address similar themes or topics.
- Students will spell correctly.
- Students will write explanatory text to convey ideas.
- Students will write narratives to develop imagined experiences.



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core English Language Arts skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

SELECTIONS

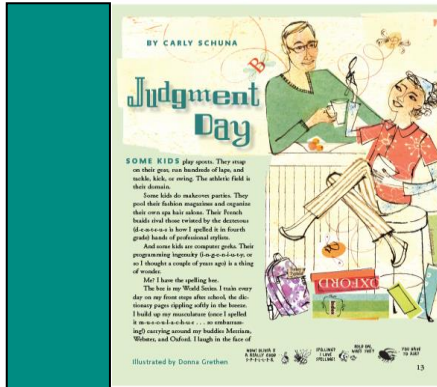
- **Judgment Day**
Contemporary Realistic Fiction
- **Rule of Rock**
Science Fiction
- **Snow Maiden**
Folktale

Judgment Day

pp. 13–18, Contemporary

Realistic Fiction

Have students write an alternate ending to this story about two students who compete in a spelling bee.



RESOURCES

- Story Endings

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will write narratives to develop imagined events.
- Students will spell correctly.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **ambitious (p. 14)** having a strong desire to be successful
- **outsmart (p. 15)** to defeat or trick someone by being more intelligent or clever
- **savant (p. 16)** a person who knows a lot about a particular subject

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What makes a good story ending?

Discuss the elements of a good story ending. Then brainstorm with students a list of familiar books and movies with memorable endings. Discuss whether the endings were satisfying or frustrating and what made them so. Tell students to pay attention to the ending of “Judgment Day” and consider other ways the story could end.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Read the vocabulary words and definitions. Then display the sentences below and have students use the vocabulary words to complete them.

1. My Aunt Nancy is a/an _____ when it comes to baseball statistics.
2. Ralph is a/an _____ student who worked hard to get an A on the test.
3. I tried to _____ my dog by hiding his annoying squeaky ball.

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. Why do you think this story is titled “Judgment Day”?
2. How do you know Olivia wants to win the spelling bee?
3. Why does Olivia call Nathan her archenemy, or main enemy?
4. Compare Olivia and Nathan. How are they similar and different?
5. On page 18, how does Olivia describe her feelings after she loses?
6. Which character changes the most in this story? Explain.

SKILL FOCUS: Write a New Story Ending

INSTRUCT: Point out that stories have many different kinds of endings. For example, some end with an important observation or quote, or an important action. Distribute the *Story Endings* worksheet and discuss surprise and cliffhanger endings. Have students work in small groups to list stories that have these endings. Then briefly review the main events of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* before having groups write two new endings for this tale. Invite groups to share their endings. Next, remind students that a story builds to a climax or most exciting moment, which is followed by the story ending. Discuss the climax of “Judgment Day.” (Olivia misspells the word *rhythm*.)

ASSESS: Have groups write a new ending for the story. The new ending should be a surprise or a cliffhanger ending. New endings should show that students understand characters and their motivations; be written from the same POV and tense as in the original story; and use dialogue.

EXTEND

Language: Hold a class spelling bee using the spelling words from the story: *ingenuity, musculature, serendipitous, fandango, sesquipedalian, truncate, judgment, turmeric, algorithm*. Have students look up dictionary definitions and write sentences using the words. Then give the class time to study and practice spelling words out loud. Finally, hold the spelling bee.

Story Endings Write two new endings for *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. First write a surprise ending. Then write a cliffhanger ending.

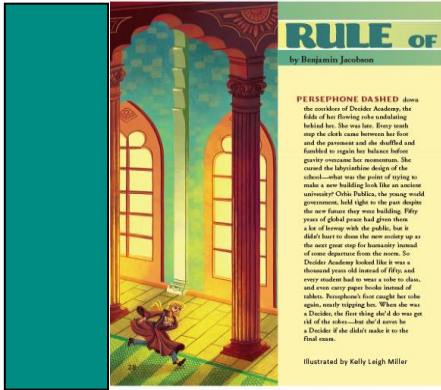
Surprise Ending	Cliffhanger Ending
Explanation: The story takes a surprising turn and ends in a way that readers don't expect.	Explanation: The story ends by leaving the reader eager to know more.
Examples:	Examples:
Practice: Rewrite <i>Goldilocks and the Three Bears</i> so it has a surprise ending. Start here: Goldilocks woke up and saw the three bears standing next to her bed.	Practice: Rewrite <i>Goldilocks and the Three Bears</i> so it has a cliffhanger ending. Start here: Goldilocks woke up and saw the three bears standing next to her bed.

Cricket® Teacher Guide: January 2024

Rule of Rock

pp. 28–31, Science Fiction

Use this story about a utopian society to give students practice in identifying theme.



OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will identify themes.
- Students will write explanatory text to convey ideas.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **entrusted** (p. 29) given the responsibility of doing something
- **utopia** (p. 29) an imaginary place in which the government, laws, and social conditions are perfect
- **protracted** (p. 31) lasting a long time

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What makes a good story ending?

Point out that some stories end with a character learning a lesson, such as “life can be challenging, but you can make the best of it”; “it takes time to learn who you truly are”; “it takes courage to make a difference.” Ask students to name stories that end with characters learning a lesson. Then tell students to think about the lesson learned by the main character in “Rule of Rock.”

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the following context sentences and underline the vocabulary words. Have students work in pairs to infer the definition of each vocabulary word, based on the sentence context. Then reveal the definitions and have students check their inferred definitions.

1. As a babysitter, Mia was entrusted with watching her little sisters.
2. I'd like to believe in a utopia, but I don't think a perfect place exists.
3. The protracted baseball game went into five extra innings.

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. How would you describe Persephone?
2. What is the relationship between Deciders, Orbis Publica, and the Global Legislature?
3. How are Deciders different from presidents and governors?
4. Were you surprised that the test was a simple game? Explain.
5. Why did the other students fail the test?
6. What qualities does a Decider need to have?
7. How does Persephone show that she has these qualities?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Theme

INSTRUCT: Review theme (the message or lesson about life that an author wants to share with readers). Give examples of literary theme statements, such as “Trust in yourself is as important as trust in others” and “People should embrace change.” Explain that usually themes are not stated and that students can figure out themes by thinking about important events resulting from character actions and decisions. Discuss themes of familiar books and movies and how they are developed.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to write a theme for “Rule of Rock” and support it with story details. Challenge students to find a stated theme in the story and support it with story details.

EXTEND

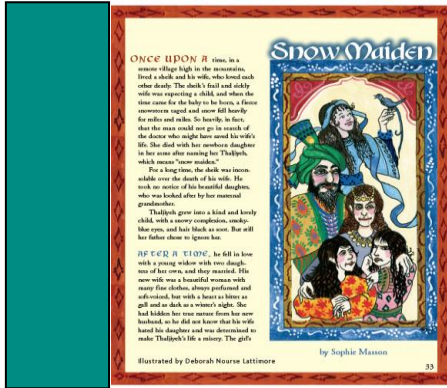
Creative Writing: Remind students that a utopia is an imaginary, perfect place. In the story, Persephone lives in a utopian world where peace, truth, and fairness are highly valued. Have students design their own utopian worlds where the government, laws, and social conditions are perfect. Have students name their utopias and describe them in writing.

Cricket® Teacher Guide: January 2024

Snow Maiden

pp. 33–39, Folktale

Use this Middle Eastern Cinderella story as part of a comparison of different versions of Cinderella.



RESOURCES

- Compare Cinderella Stories (2 pages)

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will analyze how two texts address similar themes or topics.
- Students will write narratives to develop imagined experiences.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **inconsolable** (p. 33) extremely sad and not able to be comforted
- **infuriated** (p. 34) extremely angry
- **intervene** (p. 34) to become involved in something such as a conflict in order to have an influence on what happens
- **jinn** (p. 35) a magical spirit that is a character in many Arab and Muslim traditional stories

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: What makes a good story ending?

Discuss what is meant by the phrase “fairytale ending” (living happily ever after). Discuss specific stories that have fairytale endings, such as *Cinderella*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Rapunzel*, and *Sleeping Beauty*. Explain that these stories are very old and exist in many different versions from many different cultures. Tell students they will be comparing different Cinderella stories, beginning with “Snow Maiden.”

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display and read aloud the vocabulary words and definitions. Have students write sentences that use the words correctly and then exchange sentences with a partner to check each other’s work. Remind students to look for the vocabulary words as they read the poem.

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. How is Thaljiyeh’s attitude toward life different from her stepmother and stepsisters’ attitude?
2. What is your impression of Thaljiyeh’s father? Is he kind, cruel, or something else?
3. What is the first magical event in the story?
4. How does Thaljiyeh lose her shoe?
5. How does a shoe bring Thaljiyeh and the sheik’s son together?

SKILL FOCUS: Compare Cinderella Stories

INSTRUCT: Ask students to describe how “Snow Maiden” is similar to other Cinderella stories they know. Then distribute the *Compare Cinderella Stories* worksheet. Have students work in small groups to fill in the first column with information from “Snow Maiden.” Next, provide groups with a modern retelling of Charles Perrault’s Cinderella story. Have groups add details from this story to their worksheets. Then have them discuss similarities and differences between the two Cinderella stories.

ASSESS: Have groups choose and read a third Cinderella story, such as Tomie DiPaola’s *Adelita* (Mexico), John Steptoe’s *Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters* (Zimbabwe), or Rafe Martin’s *The Rough-Face Girl* (Algonquin). Lists of stories are easily found on the internet, or your school librarian can help you find stories. Groups should fill in the third column with story details and then discuss similarities, differences, patterns, and themes within the three tales.

EXTEND

Creative Writing: Challenge students to write their own Cinderella stories, which may be humorous or serious. Setting can be any time or place. The main character does not have to be a girl. Stories should contain cruel and kind characters and involve shoes as part of the resolution. Invite students to share their stories with the class.

Compare Cinderella Stories, P. 1

Fill in the first column with your group's description of Snow Maiden. Use the second column to describe the "Charles Perrault's" Cinderella story (the modern version). In the third column, find another Cinderella story in a book or on the internet to fill in the third column. Discuss the similarities and differences in the classroom.

Story Title	"Snow Maid" (Middle East)		
Main character			
Cruel characters			
Important events			

Compare Cinderella Stories, P. 2 continued

Problems			
Solutions			
Magical events			
Ending			