

Chapter 1: Foreword

(For Parents)

This short book has a single purpose: to show grammar and middle school students how to write a short story. The process can be used over and over and is, in fact, based on the process I use to write all my stories including my novels.

One of the biggest obstacles facing someone who wants to write a story is coming up with an idea for that story. Getting ideas is easy, but recognizing an idea as a story idea, not so much.

After thinking up a story idea, the writer has to create the characters, the setting and the plot. These are confusing and difficult tasks if the student doesn't have a process to fall back on. That is what this book concentrates on: developing a process for the young writers to use.

In this book, I will provide the starting idea for three different stories. These are ideas that will resonant with the students and will get them to want to write the stories. After that, the book will walk the student through the process of developing the characters, the setting and the plot. There are downloadable worksheets for each story to assist the writer. Finally, the book will show the writers how to organize the ideas into scenes in order to tell the story. This ebook takes advantage of new developments in the publishing industry. In addition to the text, it also includes graphics, audio tracks and video clips. Consequently, it cannot be viewed in older ebook readers. It requires an advanced app like iBooks in order to use all the features. In iBooks, you can also highlight parts of the

text if you wish.

Kids can watch part of a video clip on a topic then stop the book and fill in the worksheets provided for that topic. When finished, the student can go back to the video and read and watch the next section. It is hoped that using this process will make it easier and more interesting for the students to write more stories on their own.

The story ideas are:

- a pet with superpowers
- a quest story with unusual characters
- a story with superheroes

The material for the first story in this book is based upon a talk I developed at the request of Jackie Christiano, Vice-principal of Vally Middle School in Oakland, NJ. Ms Christiano wanted my talk to get 7th graders to write more stories, preferably on their own. The project was successful and the talk has been repeated for several years.

The material for the quest and hero stories was put together at the request of Michelle Jurgensen, the children's librarian at the Cresskill, NJ library.