

Unit 2 Mini-Lesson

Realistic Fiction



What is realistic fiction?

Realistic fiction features characters and plots that could actually happen in everyday life. The settings are authentic—they are based on familiar places such as a home, school, office, or farm. The stories involve some type of conflict or problem. The conflict can be something a character faces within himself, an issue between characters, or a problem between a character and nature.

What is the purpose of realistic fiction?

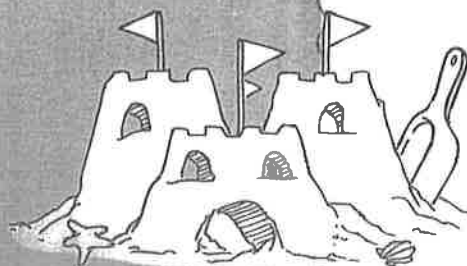
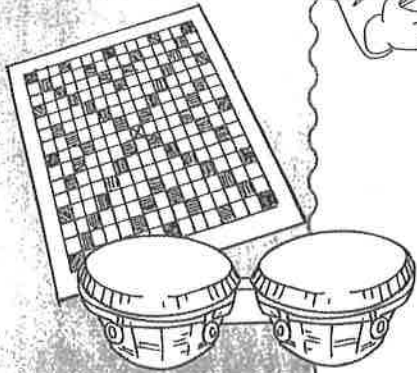
Realistic fiction shows how people grow and learn, deal with successes and failures, make decisions, build relationships, and solve problems. In addition to making readers think and wonder, realistic fiction is entertaining. Most of us enjoy “escaping” into someone else’s life for a while.

Who is the audience for realistic fiction?

Anyone is the audience for realistic fiction. Realistic fiction is especially enjoyable for readers who are interested in human thoughts, feelings, and experiences in a realistic place or circumstance.

How do you read realistic fiction?

1. The title will give you a clue about an important character or conflict in the story.
2. Pay attention to the thoughts, feelings, and actions of the main characters.
3. Note how the characters change from the beginning of the story to the end.
4. Ask yourself: *What moves this character to action? Can I learn something from his or her struggles?*



The Thing in the Cave

“Tucker! Where are you?” Tucker is my dog. There’s nothing he likes better than chasing birds.

Tucker and I were walking on the beach when a seagull swooped down into the sand. It stood there like a statue. Tucker barked and then took off after the gull.

I thought he’d stop running when the gull was in the air. But my dog kept chasing the gull. I worried whether he’d be able to find his way back to Granny’s.

I saw a boy building a handsome sand castle. I asked but he had not seen a dog. “My name’s Jake,” the boy said as he scooped sand from the moat.

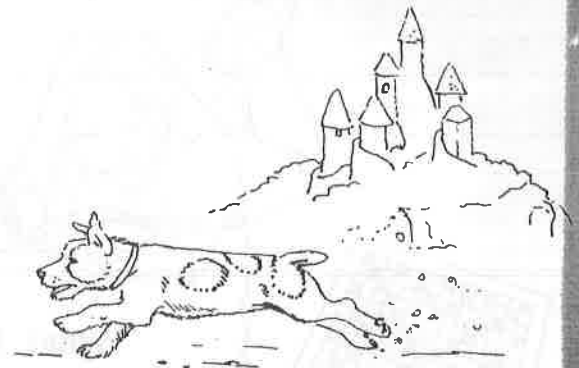
“I’m Cai,” I told him as I looked around for Tucker. Suddenly a girl raced down the beach, smashing Jake’s castle. The walls collapsed into the moat like melting snowmen.

“I’ll get you for this, Linda!” Jake screamed.

“Follow me!” she ordered. “Dad discovered a cave!” We followed Linda like ducklings following their mother. We came to the cave, and Linda strolled right in, totally fearless.

Jake whispered, “Maybe there’s a monster in there.” I entered the cave, and Jake followed me. Suddenly we heard loud breathing. Linda and Jake ran out immediately. I was alone in the cave with The Thing! But I wasn’t afraid because I’d heard that panting sound before.

I carried IT out of the cave. “Ladies and gentleman,” I said, “meet ‘The Thing,’ also known as my dog, Tucker.”



Name _____ Date _____

Use what you read in the passage to answer the questions.

1. Who are the characters in the story?

2. Which character is telling the story?

3. Where does the story take place?

4. What does the author mean when she compares the castle walls to melting snowmen?

5. List the character traits of Cai and Linda.

6. What is the main character's problem?

7. Is the story told in first person point of view or third person point of view?

8. The story uses two similes. A simile is a comparison using the word "like" or "as." Write one of the similes from the story.

The Alien in the Laundry Room

“Where is Jamal?” Brooke wondered after school. She and the other kids from the Oak Street Apartments always walked home together. Today Jamal was nowhere in sight.

When they got home, Jalissa flung the door open, almost knocking Ms. Tilly down. Ms. Tilly was the manager of the apartments. “Jamal has been taken by aliens,” Jalissa cried frightfully.

“Watch where you’re going,” scolded Ms. Tilly. “Jamal is downstairs doing laundry.” The kids trooped down to the basement. In one corner of the unlit basement, two eyes glowed red. The kids could make out a shadowy creature almost as big as a washing machine. “Is that an alien?” cried Brooke.

“No, it’s a dog,” Jamal said as he turned on the light. “I found him all skinny and trembling on the sidewalk.”

“We can tell he hasn’t eaten in a while. He is looking at us like we’re raw meat!” said Luke. “Ms. Tilly will NOT let you keep him.”

But Jamal was optimistic. He asked his friends to help him wash the dog. The clean and fluffy dog shook his giant body, then broke free and ran into Ms. Tilly. She saw the great wet beast and screamed.

Hearing this, the dog rolled over and put up one paw. Ms. Tilly asked Jamal if this was the dog he had asked about. Jamal nodded. “Little dogs are yappy and remind me of rats. I prefer big dogs,” she exclaimed. However, Ms. Tilly DID say “yes.” Later, Jamal remarked, “Even the scariest creature may have a secret soft side. And I don’t mean the dog,” said Jamal. “I mean Ms. Tilly!”



Name _____ Date _____

Use what you read in the passage to answer the questions.**1.** Who are the characters in the story?

2. Who is telling the story? Is it one of the characters or a narrator?

3. Why are the kids at first afraid of Ms. Tilly?

4. How do the characters know one another?

5. What does the title tell you about the story?

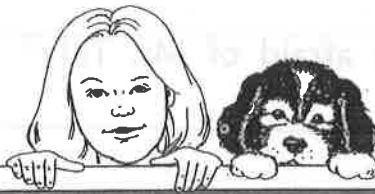
6. What is the problem in the story?

7. The words “DID” and “NOT” are in all-capital letters. Why do you think the author did that?

8. The story uses a simile. A simile is a comparison using the word “like” or “as.” Write the simile from the story.

Takes place in a real setting

**Deals with a problem
(self, others, or nature)**



**Realistic
Fiction**

**Has characters who act like
real people**

**Is told from a first person or
third person point of view**