



**Magical Creatures**  
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Elementary School Writer-In-Residence

**Grade Level:** 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>

**Time Frame:** 60 minutes

**Learning Objectives:**

- To teach students to think outside of their world and to envision new places and things that may or may not exist in their present world.
- To introduce the idea of nouns and adjectives and to create more complex sentences with this knowledge.
- To practice the basics of paragraph writing i.e. beginning, middle, and end.
- To introduce the literary technique of description, as well as the idea of props

**Prior Skills:** None required

**Sequence of Activities**

I. Introduction: 15-20 minutes

- Introduce the idea of stories and the importance of creating a character. Ask students: what makes a good story? Let the discussion go for a few minutes and eventually settle on the idea of creating a character.
- Introduce *Into the Land of the Unicorns* and read the excerpt from the book.
- Here is a brief summary of the plot up until this point: Cara's grandmother gave her a special necklace while they were running from an evil hunter. She told her to whisper the words "Luster bring me home," so that she could escape the evil man. Cara had to jump from a high clock tower and whisper these words while holding the special necklace. When Cara woke up she was in a different world where strange things started happening to her. The part I'm going to read starts just after Cara has escaped a delver, which is an evil creature that keeps trying to steal Cara's necklace.

- Have students think of various kinds of magical creatures and generate a list on the board. Have students think about the types of powers their creature might have and where it might live.
- Review briefly nouns and adjectives. Explain why they are important in creating a character. In this case, you are trying to create something specific and unique. The more descriptive words that you use, such as color, the more unique your character becomes.
- Have students create a collaborative magical creature
- Below are prompts for the collaborative paragraph. Leave these prompts on the board after the collaborative activity. Students can use these prompts in the creation of their own magical creature.
  - 1) Does the creature look like other animals?
  - 2) Does any part of it look human?
  - 3) What color is it?
  - 4) How tall is it?
  - 5) What language does it speak?
  - 6) How does it speak? Through the mouth or some other way?
  - 7) What kinds of special powers does it have?
  - 8) What does it eat? What is their favorite food?
  - 9) What is the creature afraid of?
  - 10) Where does the creature live?
  - 11) Does it live alone or with other people?
  - 12) What does it like to do for fun?
  - 13) What is your creatures' name?
- Show students how to format answers to these questions into a paragraph. Make sure they don't just answer the question, but begin to construct a character.
- Example: My creature is part fairy and part horse. Her name is Celia the FairyHorse. She uses her wings to fly, and then she runs through the air. She lives in a mountain of clouds with her mother and father. She speaks French in the sky, but English on the ground. She talks with her eyes, and humans can't hear her.

## II. Writing Activity: 30 minutes

- Before they begin writing have them think up names for their creature. They can use their own name, for instance, Erin's Unicorn, or come up with something completely original that refers back to their magical power, like Lighthealer. Have them put this at the top of their paper.
- Have the students write a paragraph, 5-8 sentences, describing their creature and its magical power. If they get stuck have them include descriptions of where the creature lives, what it eats, what special things it can do, if it can talk etc. Have them include 5-10 adjectives in describing their creature.

Prompts for writing are:

My [title of creature] can...

My [dragon] likes...

My [elf] eats...

My [creature] does

My [unicorn] is afraid of

My [flying snake] hates

[title of creature] flies to

[title of creature] runs from

You can also have them include:

Height

Hair color

Eye color

Skin Color

Size, big, small etc.

Secret powers

- If there is time, have students take the second sheet of paper and draw their animal. Try and get them to think about color, texture, and what the powers of the creature looks like.

III. CLOSING: 15 min

- Either collect the student's work and read it aloud, or have each student show their creature and read their paragraph aloud.

**Required Resources:** *Into the Land of the Unicorns, Chapter 5, the first 14 paragraphs*

*Into the Land of the Unicorns*  
Chapter 5

Lightfoot

The moment of pain was brief but intense. When it faded, a tingling spread over Cara's skin, as if she were being shocked by a thousand tiny batteries.

The unicorn stepped back in surprise. Cara looked down at her chest. The fabric of her shirt was torn where the horn had pierced it. Yet the flesh beneath was unbroken, bloodless, the only sign for what had just happened, a tiny, star-shaped scar.

The unicorn laid his horn gently upon her shoulder. Then, to her astonishment, he spoke to her: "I see I am not the first of my kind that you have met. Alas, you have a wound that not even I can heal."

The puzzling message came not in words as Cara knew them, sounds made in the throat and carried on the air. Instead, the silvery creature spoke inside her head, his meaning carried to her in a strange internal combination of images, sounds, feelings – even smells that she could not have explained, yet that was so perfectly clear that she understood even the note of surprise that underlay his thought.

"I'm not going to hurt you," he added. "I just wanted to make it possible to communicate with you. It will be easier for me to heal you if we can speak."

"What do you mean?" she asked, trying to keep her voice from quavering.

"Don't speak out loud! I can't understand you that way. Just form the thought and send it to me. You'll need to stay in contact with me, at least for now."

Though the horn was already resting on her shoulder, she gingerly set her hand on it for good measure. It was as smooth as the inside of an oyster shell, and pleasantly warm.

"Where am I?" she asked.

"She sensed him receiving the message. *I'm talking to a unicorn!* she thought, so excited she almost missed the answer.

"You are in the Cave of Dimblethum," he told her. "In the Forest of the Queen, on the edge of the wild, in the world of Luster."

"Luster?"

"The home of the unicorns."

## **Student Samples**

### **James**

My creature is a dragon. This dragon is no ordinary dragon. This dragon has a hundred heads. Nobody has defeated this dragon. His body parts are metal. He breathes fire and he has spikes on his back. He has a fire head, but nobody knows how that happened. His favorite foods are trees, cows, and metal. His hobby is flying over the sun because he is a fire dragon. Fire helps him stay alive.

*Nathaniel Perry 4<sup>th</sup> Grade*

### **Red Rock**

His name is Red Rock. He is a dragon. His eyes are gold. His skin is purple. He speaks English, Spanish, and French. He speaks underwater. His special power is transforming into whatever he sees. He has a ruby or a crystal that is what causes him to transform. He likes to eat everything. Like when a bear gets near him he transforms into a bear and if he wins he eats the bear, that's what happens. He lives in an apartment with his friends Martin The Bear, Jack The Raccoon, and Froggy The Frog. They met him when they were in school.

*Blass Velarde 4<sup>th</sup> Grade*

### **Gonitha**

She has blue hair and loves black, and green eyes. She loves wearing dresses because she is a fairy. Her name is Gonitha Flimintine. She eats pink berries. She can freeze everything and she can change stuff into different colors. She has a green house with blue stripes with a diamond crystal made out of ice in the front of her ice house.

*Angelica Santa Cruz 4<sup>th</sup> Grade*