



Magical Creatures Land
by Erin Armstrong
Elementary School Writer-In-Residence

Grade Level: 3rd - 5th

Time Frame: 1 hour

Learning Objectives:

- Students should be able to describe where their creature lives and the details of that area. They should be able to describe the home of their creature, as well as the surrounding area. This should give them a sense of the world they are creating for their character.
- Students should be able to describe place as a way of introducing setting into their writing. They should be able to invent a place for a character they've already created.

Prior Knowledge: None required

Required Resources: *The Hobbit*, by J.R.R. Tolkien. Optional: Image of Bilbo Baggins.

Sequence of Activities

I. Warm-up

- Have students think about the importance of place in a story.
- Read the excerpt from *The Hobbit* by Tolkien
- Discuss the importance of place in a story. Lead them through a discussion about the various kinds of places. There are entire worlds that authors make up, then there are countries, and in this piece this describes a creature's home.

Collaborative activity:

- Have students take the magical creature, created the week before, and describe where it lives. Focus on the home in particular and the various details surrounding the home.

- Go over the definition of an adjective and try to incorporate a few adjectives into the piece so that the students see how to make more complex sentences.

Here is an example:

Hydranoid lives in a blue wooded house with tiny black polka dots painted on the outside. He loves to sit by the warm fire and smoke his pipe with his second head. The first head eats his food, which looks like mush, with a tube from his ear.

The students can make this as real or as fantastical as they would like. Once the collaborative piece has been established move onto the individual writing.

II. Creating a Magical Home:

- After the collaborative home has been established, have students move to the individual activity.
- Here are prompts:

Where is the creature's home?

What does it look like?

Is it a normal house?

Is it underground?

Is it in the sky?

Do other people know it exists? Is it visible?

What color is it?

How many bedrooms?

Who else lives in the house?

Does anything magical happen in or around the house?

What does the furniture look like?

Does your magical creature have a favorite spot in the house?

What can it see from the house?

Are there other creatures nearby?

Do they have the land to themselves?

What kind of weird things happen?

What is the weather like?

- Have students come up with at least ten sentences describing where precisely their magical creature lives. Have them use at least five adjectives as part of this description. Also try to get the students to write more complex sentences if possible.
- If time allows have students draw their creature's home as well as their creature.

III. Closing Time:

- Share work with the class

IV. Extension Activities:

- Have students draw both their creature as well as their home. If they finish describing their home then have them describe the country that their creature lives in and then the world where the creature resides.

Required Resource Excerpt:

from the beginning of *The Hobbit*:

In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort.

It had a perfectly round door like a porthole, painted green, with a shiny yellow brass knob in the exact middle. The door opened on to a tube-shaped hall like a tunnel: a very comfortable tunnel without smoke, with panelled walls, and floors tiled and carpeted, provided with polished chairs, and lots and lots of pegs for hats and coats—the hobbit was fond of visitors. The tunnel wound on and on, going fairly but not quite straight into the side of the hill—The Hill, as all the people for many miles round called it—and many little round doors opened out of it, first on one side and then on another. No going upstairs for the hobbit: bedrooms, bathrooms, cellars, pantries (lots of these), wardrobes (he had whole rooms devoted to clothes), kitchens, dining-rooms, all were on the same floor, and indeed on the same passage. The best rooms were all on the left-hand side (going in), for these were the only ones to have windows, deep-set round windows looking over his garden, and meadows beyond, sloping down to the river.

This hobbit was a very well-to-do hobbit, and his name was Baggins

Student Samples

The Night Watchers' Palace

Her apartment is as big as a school. It's next to circle K in Idaho the home of the potato on earth. She loves her house. She has an indoor Burger King and a Chick-Fil-a. The apartment is neon green with blue stripes and colorful polka dots. Nobody can see the house because a big picture of land is in front so no one can see it, not even her Mom! No one is near it. It's made out of dog food so if she takes a bite it grows back.

Brianna Lopez 4th Grade

Scorpion's Home

Scorpion came from the planet Moripian. He is the only one left. Scorpion came to earth when he was pushed to be safe from the spidermonkey. They destroyed his planet with everyone on it. He made an underground home. If he goes hunting he can make another home. He can make human rooms and windows whenever he wants.