

STORYPATH®

Solving Problems in the Park: **Developing Young Citizens**

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ABOUT STORYPATH

THE STORYPATH STRATEGY

Storypath offers both a structure for organizing the social studies curriculum and an instructional strategy for teaching. The structure is a familiar one: the story. The strategy is grounded in a belief that students learn best when they are active participants in their own learning, and places students' own efforts to understand at the center of the educational enterprise. Together, the structure and the teaching strategy ensure that students feel strongly motivated and have meaningful and memorable learning experiences.

Originally developed in Scotland during the 1960s, Storypath draws support from decades of experience with teachers and students. The approach has its roots in these beliefs about students and learning:

- The world is complex and presents many layers of information. Students know a good deal about how the world works and have a reservoir of knowledge that is often untapped in the classroom.
- When students build on that knowledge through activities such as questioning and researching, new understandings are acquired. Because students construct their own knowledge and understanding of their world, their learning is more meaningful and memorable.
- Problem solving is a natural and powerful human endeavor. When students are engaged in problem-solving, they take ownership for their learning.
- The story form integrates content and skills from many disciplines and provides a context for students to gain a deeper, more complex understanding of major concepts.

AN INQUIRY APPROACH

Questioning, by both teacher and students, is a key component of Storypath. Through the story structure and the discourse it creates, the teacher guides students in their search for meaning and understanding as they acquire new knowledge and skills. Your questions, and the discussions they engender, cause students to:

- ask their own questions and think critically about what they know;
- use their prior knowledge to make sense of new information;
- connect personally to important social studies concepts.

The story structure and inquiry guided by unit goals provide the framework for students to integrate skills and complex content through problems they encounter. As they do so, their understanding of important concepts is extended and key connections are made.

THE STORY STRUCTURE

For thousands of years, stories have helped us create order and make connections between events. Storypath's narrative structure helps students understand concepts that they often find difficult to comprehend in the traditional social studies curriculum.

Each Storypath unit centers on a unique and engaging story that provides a concrete context for understanding the social science content. This story may be based on actual historical events, as developed in *Struggle for Independence*. Or the story might instead be based on typical community or business structures, as developed in *Families in Their Neighborhoods* or in *Understanding the Marketplace*. From all of these structures, students develop a meaningful context for developing understanding of the topic.

Typical structure of a Storypath unit

CREATING THE SETTING

Students create the setting by completing a frieze or mural of the place.

CREATING THE CHARACTERS

Students create characters for the story whose roles they will play during subsequent episodes.

BUILDING CONTEXT

Students are involved in activities such as reading and writing to stimulate them to think more deeply about the people and the place they have created.

CRITICAL INCIDENTS

Characters confront problems typical of those faced by people of that time and place.

CONCLUDING EVENT

Students plan and participate in an activity that brings closure to the story.

USING THE COMPONENTS

TEACHER'S HANDBOOK

Each Storypath unit includes a Teacher's Handbook, which is designed to be flexible and easy to use.

Episode Planning Guides

Each episode opens with an overview of the instructional plan and materials needed.

Teaching Notes

Each Handbook contains detailed support for instruction.



from the *Safari to Kenya* unit



from the *Safari to Kenya* unit

Teaching Masters

Masters provide nonfiction content, writing models, or other information specific to the unit's content. These Masters can be copied for students, displayed in the classroom, or made into transparencies, depending on your teaching needs.



from the *Safari to Kenya* unit

Assessment

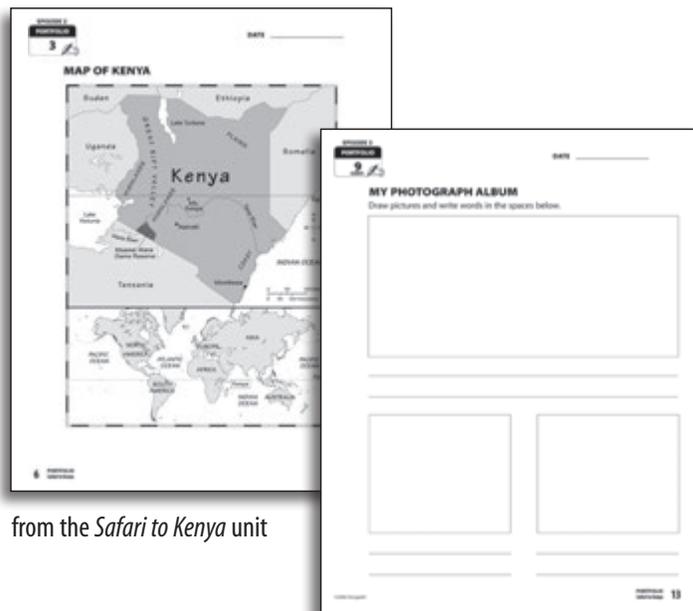
Each Handbook contains strategies for assessing learning throughout the unit, as well as unit questions for review and synthesis activities.



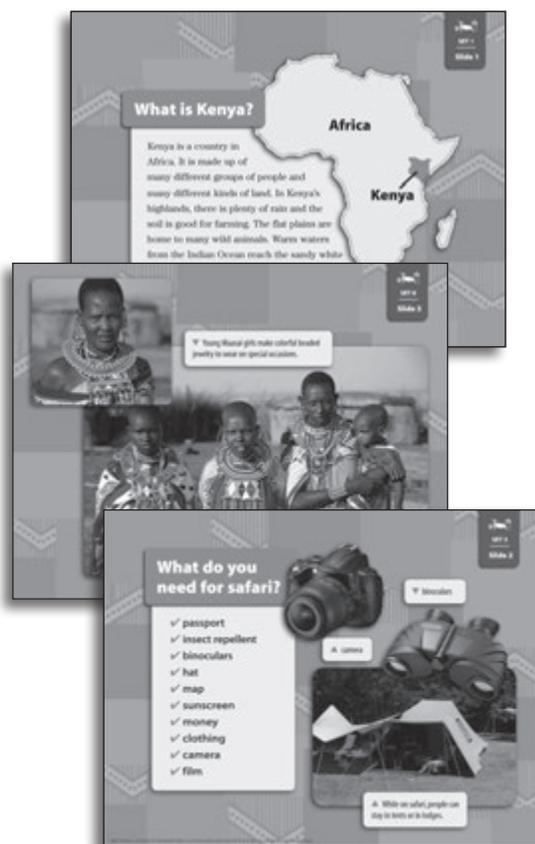
from the *Safari to Kenya* unit

STUDENT PORTFOLIO

Students use the Portfolio to read, write, build vocabulary, and complete other activities crucial to the specific Storypath unit. The Portfolio helps students manage their work throughout the unit, and when completed, the Portfolio becomes an authentic assessment tool.



from the *Safari to Kenya* unit



from the *Safari to Kenya* unit

CONTENT SLIDE SETS

Each unit includes sets of Content Slides that offer flexibility in how they are used to support student learning. The number of sets varies from unit to unit. The slides in each set provide focused non-fiction content and can be used for independent, paired, or small group reading.

Students use the slides to build context and deepen their understanding of the unit's content. You can use the slides as most appropriate to your situation. For those with laptops, display the appropriate slides for student reading and discussion or reproduce the slides as needed for each episode for individuals, pairs or small groups.

In the overview of each episode, slide sets needed are listed and specific suggestions are provided for how to use the slides as you proceed through the episode. Best practice is for the slide to be available to the students either on a laptop in front of them or in hard copy. Then the teacher can use a large screen to display and support discussion related to the slide.

A “reading tips” chart in PDF format (located on the CD) provides quick reminders of key reading strategies. Reproduce “reading tips” for each student or group.

Note that the slides are conveniently available in a printable format on the CD.

LITERACY AND STORYPATH

With the Storypath strategy, students deepen their understanding of major social studies concepts. Storypath provides literacy support to help students access and make sense of the social studies content. Students apply literacy skills such as reading comprehension, prewriting and writing skills, speaking and listening skills, and vocabulary development.

Reading

Content Slide Sets present opportunities for students to engage in focused content reading. Students can use the slides to engage in shared reading or listen as a teacher or another student reads.



from the *Safari to Kenya* unit

Comprehension

Discussion questions on Content Slides help students focus on important content. Questions are labeled with suggested reading strategies.

Visual Literacy

Each unit offers numerous opportunities to evaluate and respond to visuals such as photographs, maps, diagrams, and illustrations.

Reading Tips

For easy reference, Reading Tips for using the reading strategies are included on the CD.

Safari to Kenya The Land and the People		
Reading Tips		
Reading Strategy	When do readers use the strategy?	How do I use it?
Main idea/ supporting details	Readers use it to find the big idea. Then they pick out facts and details that support it.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Think about what you want to know. 2. Think about what you already know. 3. Read the text and think: What's the "big idea" here? 4. Look for information that seems important to the big idea. Some information is interesting but not important.
Comparing and contrasting	Readers use it to find information that tells how two or more ideas are alike and different.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Think about what you want to know. 2. Choose two events or ideas to compare and contrast. 3. List important information about the first event or idea. 4. For each item on the list, look for information about how the other idea is the same or different.
Connecting	Readers use it to understand new information by making connections with what they already know.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When you come across new information that you want to remember, think about what you already know. 2. Look for connections between the new information and what you already know from experience or reading. 3. Think to yourself: "This is like ..."
Understanding visuals	Readers use it to find important information presented in visual form, such as maps, diagrams, and photographs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Think about what you want to know. 2. Think about what you already know. 3. Look for information that explains the visual. For example, look at labels, captions, or map keys. 4. Search for the specific information you want.

from the *Safari to Kenya* unit

Writing

Throughout each unit, students complete writing activities to prompt thinking as well as to demonstrate what they have learned.



from the *Safari to Kenya* unit

Speaking and Listening

Students refine these skills by presenting ideas to the class and resolving issues through discussion and collaboration.



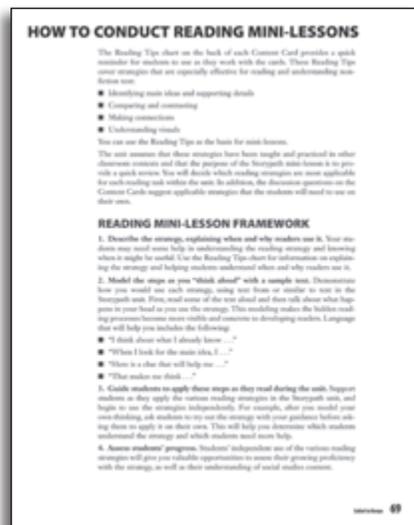
from the *Safari to Kenya* unit

Vocabulary Development

In each unit, students are exposed to specialized vocabulary for speaking and writing. Students create word banks in their Portfolio by recording content words.



from the *Safari to Kenya* unit



from the *Safari to Kenya* unit

ASSESSMENT

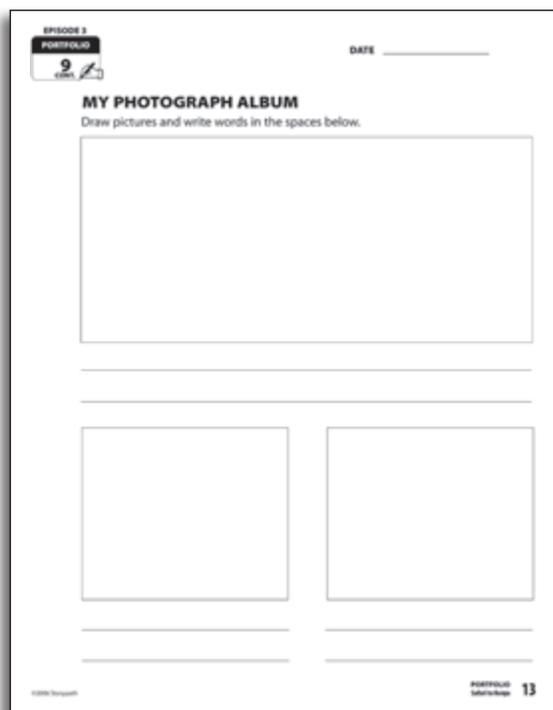
Each Storypath unit offers a range of options for assessing student learning.

Portfolio Assessment

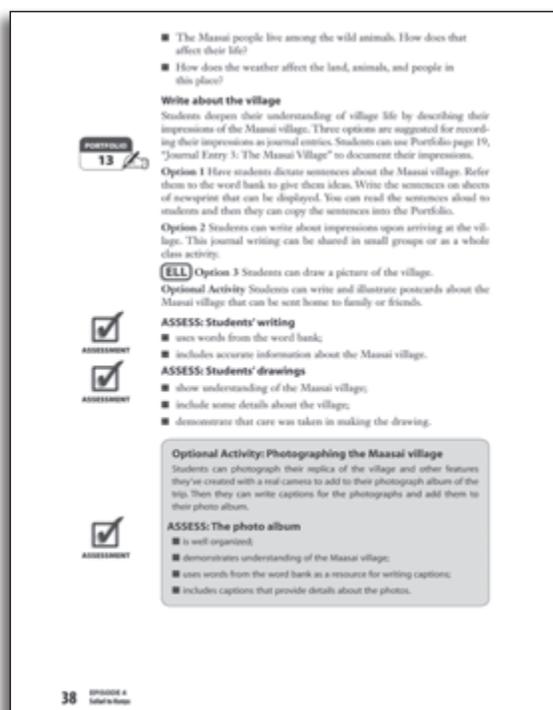
The Student Portfolio provides ongoing assessment of student understanding of unit objectives through writing and other response activities.

During Each Episode

Assessment suggestions are included throughout the Teacher's Handbook and align with the Student Portfolio. Complex thinking and problem-solving abilities are assessed as students role-play and respond to critical events throughout the unit.



from the *Safari to Kenya* unit



from the *Safari to Kenya* unit

Self-Assessment

Students have opportunities to assess their own work, such as writing and oral presentations. There are also opportunities for student reflection at the end of each episode.

EPISODE 7
7 **WORKING IN A GROUP**
 PART I
 Below are some things you can do to work well together while making your part of the fence.
 1. Listen to each other's ideas.
 2. Stay on task.
 3. Help each other.
 4. Do careful work.
 5. Work together to solve problems.
 PART II
 After you made the Maasai Mara, think about how you worked with others. How did you do?
 Not often/never Sometimes Always
 1. I listened to other's ideas. 😞 😐 😊
 2. I stayed on task. 😞 😐 😊
 3. I helped others. 😞 😐 😊
 4. I did careful work. 😞 😐 😊
 5. I cooperated. 😞 😐 😊

from the *Safari to Kenya* unit

Social Skills

A social skills master is provided to support student self-assessment and can be used at the teacher's discretion whenever students need to reflect and build on such skills.

EPISODE 8
8 **PRESENTING WILDLIFE REPORTS**
 How did you do?
 Not often/never Sometimes Always
 1. I stood tall. 😞 😐 😊
 2. I looked at the audience. 😞 😐 😊
 3. I spoke clearly and loudly. 😞 😐 😊
 4. I shared information about my animal. 😞 😐 😊

from the *Safari to Kenya* unit

End of the Unit

At the conclusion of the unit, synthesizing questions reinforce unit objectives. Optional synthesis activities are included to guide students to apply what they've learned. Each synthesis activity includes criteria for assessment—you decide how best to use these options.

UNIT QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW
DISCUSSING THE SAFARI TO KENYA
 Lead a discussion that reinforces the concepts and generalizations taught throughout the unit. The following questions encourage a discussion of major concepts. Include questions about any problem-solving situations you've added to the unit.
 ● If you knew someone who was going on safari to Kenya, what would you tell him or her to help prepare for the trip?
 ● How does the climate in Kenya affect the animals and people of the Maasai Mara?
 ● What is special about this region of the world?
 ● Why is it important to have game reserves that protect wild animals?
 ● What can people learn from seeing and studying wildlife in its natural environment?
 ● How do the Maasai people get what they need from the environment?
 ● If you were a Maasai child, what would a typical day be like for you?
 ● How is the way the Maasai live like the way you live? How is it different?
 ● Why is it important to learn about other cultures?
 ● How can people resolve misunderstandings?
REFLECTING ON THE SAFARI TO KENYA
 Students need time to reflect on their experiences and their progress throughout this unit. Have them respond to questions like these:
 ■ What have I learned about the wildlife of the Maasai Mara and the Maasai people?
 ■ What is the best work I did? Why was it good?
 ■ What work could I have done better? How could I have made it better?
 ■ What did I like most about working with others? What did I like least?

from the *Safari to Kenya* unit

SYNTHESIS ACTIVITIES
 The following synthesis activities offer students the opportunity to demonstrate what they've learned in this unit. These activities are also powerful tools for you because they're multidisciplinary. They allow for the opportunity to measure students' abilities as learners. These activities also allow you to assess students on a variety of subjects on a number of different levels. Each synthesis activity is followed by Criteria for Assessment.
1. PORTFOLIO RESPONSE
Activity
 Have students review their Portfolios and identify at least four items that represent important ideas or skills learned. After students have selected the items, meet with each student to discuss these points.
 ■ why the item was selected
 ■ why the item was important to the student's learning
Criteria for Assessment
 The portfolio is successful if
 ■ the student can explain why each item was selected and what was learned from the item.
 ■ it demonstrates an understanding of the geography, wildlife, and Maasai people of Kenya.
 ■ it includes evidence of at least one problem that was encountered, and the student can explain how that problem was solved.
 ■ reflections are thoughtful and clearly communicated.
2. COMPARE AND CONTRAST LIFESTYLES
Activity
 Have students compare and contrast their own lives to the life of a Maasai child living in Kenya. Provide each student with the sentence starters below. Students can complete each sentence using words and pictures or just pictures.
 My house looks like this:
 If I were Maasai, my house (home) would look like this:
 In my neighborhood, I can see these animals:
 If I were Maasai, I would see these animals on the grassland:
 I am responsible for these chores at my house:
 If I were Maasai, I would have these responsibilities:
 This is what I like to wear:
 If I were Maasai, I would wear clothes like these:
 My favorite foods are these:
 If I were Maasai, I would eat these foods.

from the *Safari to Kenya* unit

PLANNING THE UNIT

THE PARK

MAKE KEY DECISIONS

Make Classroom Space for the Storypath. You will need ample wall space for displaying the park planners and the frieze of the park or alternatively a counter or tabletop for a three-dimensional park. Additionally, you will need space to display various lists, artifacts, students' writing, and other materials that are created.

Manage class time. Plan five to six weeks for the unit depending on how much you integrate the activities with other aspects of your curriculum and how much time is allowed for various episodes. You will want to spend significant time each week on the Storypath so that students stay connected to the storyline, the park planners they are role-playing, and the events that occur. Thus, the ideal approach is to integrate other subjects—especially reading, writing, and science (occurring in Episode 3) with the Storypath. There are opportunities to develop word banks, to record the events of the Storypath, and write rules for the park as they encounter problems.

Plan for science investigations. If you decide to do the science investigations, you will need to obtain the seeds in advance. See Episode 3 for needed materials for each of the options and suggested timeline.

Develop group skills. There are many opportunities for students to work in groups throughout the Storypath. Suggestions for ways to facilitate this process are integrated throughout. Teaching Master 7, “Social Skills Assessment,” TH page 52, provides suggestions and a checklist for assessing social skills. At times you will want to stop the story to discuss group skills and to reflect on how students are working together. Involve students in the process by letting them set goals for group work and by encouraging them to evaluate their ability to work with others throughout the Storypath.

CUSTOMIZE THE UNIT

Adapt the unit. There may be times when you will want to modify the unit to suit your own needs and follow the logical progression of the story. Alternative activities or special arrangements are suggested at various points during the unit to assist you in adapting the unit to meet your unique needs. Frequently, students will provide an unanticipated twist to the Storypath, or important learning opportunities will arise. The Storypath allows for the accommodation of those special circumstances.

Plan for the park setting. There are a myriad of possibilities for the park and you will need to decide in advance the following:

Locate a suitable place in your community: If possible locate a place in the community that realistically could become a park—a vacant lot, a natural environment, or a place that is actually being considered for a park. If none of these options is appropriate, write a description of a setting that would be appropriate for your own community and familiar to your students.

Decide on the kind of park as a focus for the unit—a play park, sports area, botanical garden, a natural environment, or a combination of all of these. For older students, consider parks that represent different cultures such as Japanese, Chinese, or English gardens. Students can research the cultural dimensions that are related to such parks as well as the traditional flora and fauna of such parks. For younger students, it is recommended that the park be divided into two sections—a play area with swings, slides and sports field and a garden area. These two areas allow for two different learning experiences, including a science focus for the garden.

Respond to neighborhood differences. Not all students have the same experiences related to parks. In some neighborhoods, parks can be dangerous places where unsavory activities take place. In Episode 6 the critical incident presents the park as a place where students are teased or bullied. Use students' knowledge and experiences to critically examine how society uses parks and how we can all contribute to making parks safe and enjoyable places to visit.

INVOLVE OTHERS

Involve experts. In Episodes 3 when students are investigating plants, you may want to invite an expert, such as a master gardener or landscaper, to speak to the class and answer questions about plants most suited for certain kinds of parks. An expert is best used toward the end of the episode, when students have developed a knowledge base and are ready to learn more about the topic. In the concluding episode, you may want to invite the “person” who invited the students to create the park—see Episode 1.

Involve families. Parents and other family members can serve as excellent resources for you and your students. You may have family members who have special knowledge about gardening, park planning, or maintenance. Invite them to share their information. In Episode 7, students plan a dedication for the park. This is an ideal time to invite families. Students can write invitations to their families to attend the dedication.

Involve the community. A visit to a park can enrich the Storypath and provide students with a deeper understanding of how parks are organized and maintained. This activity should be carefully timed, however, and should happen only when students are truly interested in learning more about parks. Usually the best time for a field trip is at the end of the unit when students can knowledgeably compare and contrast their learning to the new information they encounter on the field trip.

Connect to local events. Watch for local stories in the news about parks or land use and use them, as appropriate, to further develop the storyline. Use newspaper advertisements about gardening supplies and so forth to help students understand and become familiar with different text types.

Create a learning community. An open and supportive atmosphere is essential for students to engage in the discourse that is basic to the learning process of the Storypath approach. Students should understand the value of reflective discussions and the importance of collaborative work to deepen their understanding of complex ideas. Consequently, students should be expected to listen carefully and respond thoughtfully and respectfully to one another's ideas.

CREATING THE SETTING

THE PLACE FOR THE PARK

EPISODE

INTRODUCING THE STORY

page 15

Students listen to a letter inviting them to create a park and then respond to the invitation.

Materials Teaching Master 1, *Letter of Invitation*, TH* p. 46
Teaching Master 2, *Letter of Response*, TH p. 47
Content Slide Set 1

Grouping Whole class

Schedule Approximately 40 minutes

CREATING THE SETTING FOR THE PARK

page 16

Students create a two or three-dimensional setting of the park.

Materials Portfolio 1, *Working Together*, p. 4
Portfolio 2, *Self-Assessment: Working Together*, p. 5
Two-dimensional setting: bulletin board space, about 3' high and 4' long, top third covered with blue butcher paper, bottom two-thirds with brown or green paper within reach of students
Optional: modeling clay
Three-dimensional setting: table or counter covered with brown or green paper various colors of construction and tissue paper—lots of browns and greens colored markers/crayons/glue/scissors
Optional: tempera paints/brushes/water cans—brown, green and blue

Grouping Divide the class into small groups of 3–4. Each group will make a different section of setting. Individuals reflect on group goals

Schedule 1–2 hours

CONCLUDING EPISODE 1

page 17

Students reflect on the episode, make a word bank, and write about the park setting

Materials For the word bank: cards/thick black marker for displaying the words on cards
Portfolio 3, *Write about the Park Setting*, p. 6
Optional: Camera and photo paper for making postcards of the setting
Pocket folders or sturdy paper to make folders for the portfolio (one per student)

Grouping Whole class for word bank and discussion of setting, whole class or individuals for writing or drawing

Schedule Approximately 30 minutes

*TH = Teacher's Handbook

EPISODE OBJECTIVES



- **Social Skills** *Organize, plan, and make decisions while creating a setting with group members.*
- **Social Skills** *Determine an appropriate course of action to complete the setting within a group.*
- **Critical Thinking** *Organize ideas from class discussion in new ways and apply those ideas to the setting.*
- **Literacy** *Listen to a description of natural setting in order to visualize it.*
- **Literacy** *Create a vocabulary word bank.*
- **Literacy** *Write description of the park.*

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Launch the unit

Explain to students that they will be creating a story about a park. Discuss with students the elements of a story: characters (the people in the story), setting (when and where the story takes place), and plot (important events that happen). Explain that this is an imaginary story. Introduce the story by reading, Teaching Master 1, “Letter of Invitation,” TH, pages 46. The letter explains the context for the story and the role students will play. Read the letter and then discuss the letter using such questions as follows:

- ❓ What did the letter ask us to do? *(Students should recall that they were asked to be park planners.)*
- ❓ Why was our class selected for the task? *(Students should recall the qualities identified in the letter.)*
- ❓ What do you know about parks? *(Guide the discussion so students consider the range of parks. Some students may have little experience with parks, so guide the discussion to build their background knowledge and make a list of parks for later reference. Amusement parks are not the focus of this Storypath.)*
- ❓ What tasks might be involved in planning and creating a park? *(Students should consider the range of skills needed for planning and creating a park. You may find that you will need to provide prompts to guide the discussion. Gardeners, designers, builders and painters are some examples.)*
- ❓ Should we accept the invitation? *(It is hoped that the response is in the affirmative so that the story can progress.)*

If students need help with imagining parks, use Content Slide Set 1 to prompt the discussion.

Respond to the letter

As a whole class activity, have students write a response to the letter. Guide the discussion so that students become familiar with the letter writing process and the message of the letter—willingness to plan and create the park, skills they can bring to the tasks, and enthusiasm for the project. Each child can sign the class letter.

For the next lesson, explain to students that a response to the letter has been received. Read the letter inserting a description of an appropriate site in your community. The site could be a vacant lot, a natural

TEACHING
MASTER

T1



CONTENT
SLIDE SET

1

TEACHING
MASTER

T2

environment in the community, or other suitable setting that could be converted to a park. If possible, select a setting that is familiar to all the students. If this is not possible, use the description in 2, “Letter of Response,” TH, pages 47. When writing a description for the setting, include information that is familiar to the students. Use Teaching Master 2 as a model. As you read the description of the setting, students should try to picture this place in their mind. Students will create the description as a visual representation.

ELL Discuss the setting

Use questions to help students vividly imagine the place you’ve described. During the discussion, make a list of students’ responses. Save it and refer to it as students construct the setting.

- 1 What do you remember about this setting? (*Guide students to recall as many specific details as possible, such as creeks, trees, bushes, and other features described in the description.*)
- 2 What colors would you find in the setting?
- 3 What other things do you remember about this setting?

CUSTOMIZE

- ELL** In whole class discussions such as this one, encourage ELL students to
- contribute words, phrases, or simple sentences;
 - use visuals to make concepts more concrete; share their prior knowledge,
 - draw or write their ideas.

CREATING THE SETTING FOR THE PARK

LITERACY

As students listen to the description and create the setting, they will:

- listen for information. (listening skills)
- imagine how the setting looks. (visualize)
- create a visual representation based on a written description. (personal/creative response)

Start the frieze

Organize students to work in small groups. Each group will make a component for the setting. Explain to students that they will be creating a frieze (mural) or three-dimensional setting for the park. First they will do the setting and then in a later episode add the features they decide are important for the park.

Organize the Work

Portfolio 1 page 4, “Working Together,” gives students a good starting point for deciding what natural features to make for their park. This page also contains tips for constructively working together in groups. Read and discuss this page with students. Here’s one method for organizing students’ work.

Step 1 Arrange students into groups of three or four. Divide the setting into sections so that each group is responsible for one section of the setting. Pencil in the major features to keep the landscape consistent and in proportion.

Step 2 Once students are organized into groups, discuss effective ways to work together using Portfolio 1, page 4, “Working Together.”

Step 3 Demonstrate techniques for making various features. Tissue paper—crumpled to give texture—works well for making trees and bushes. Torn paper works well for hills. Tissue paper can also be twisted to make branches of trees and bushes.

Step 4 The creek group can work directly on the setting while others work at their desks making their components. Place trees and bushes along the creek and other trees and bushes throughout the rest of the setting. Outline where the major features will be placed on the setting.

PORTFOLIO

1



AUTHOR NOTE

Valuing the conversation

As they work on their setting, students’ conversations will reflect their efforts to make sense of new information, solve problems, and work collaboratively.