



“The Adventures of Harold Jordan” Teacher Guide



SEASON 4 EPISODE 11

The Adventures of Harold Jordan

by a 9 year-old from Iowa named Phoebe

Overview

This week’s podcast episode features the story “The Adventures of Harold Jordan” by a 9 year-old from Iowa named Phoebe. In the story, Harold Jordan, the “most perfect celebrity in the world” ends up starring in a TV show. The only problem is that he has no idea who he is playing or what the plot is! In this lesson, students will take inspiration from Harold’s predicament and create a “Story Deck” that Harold could have used to help him come up with a story for the TV show. A story deck, for our purposes in this activity is just a deck of cards that contains ideas for the building blocks of a story. Students will be able to come up with ideas for Character, Setting, and Want, and will learn how these three elements create the basis for a dynamic story. Then, they’ll combine their ideas into a deck that the whole class can play with to write silly ideas for TV shows and stories! There are ideas at the end of this lesson for ways to use the Story Deck for further creative expression.

Age Group

Best for 2nd through 5th grade readers and writers.

storypiratescreatorclub.com

Common Core Standards

The following are some 4th grade Common Core and State standards that apply to this lesson. Similar standards for other states and ages apply.

1. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3](#) Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
2. [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.2](#) Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
3. [NY State Literacy Standards](#) Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Brainstorm ideas for Settings in a story
- Brainstorm ideas for Characters in a story
- Brainstorm ideas for Wants in a story
- Use these compiled ideas to write a silly story

Materials

1. Story Pirates Podcast: Season 4 Episode 11 (it's the second story of the episode at approximately 22:09)
2. Index cards (at least 3 per student)
3. Writer's Notebook or other place to write down ideas
4. Pen/Pencil or marker

Activity Steps

1. Intro:

Introduce the lesson to your students with a short discussion.

- **Do Now/Writer's Notebook:** Think about your favorite TV show. Answer the following:
 - Where does the TV show take place?
 - Who is a character on the TV show?
 - What is something that character wants?
- **Share:** Have students share some of their responses. You may want to track responses on the board under the headings "Setting," "Characters," and "Want"

- **Connect:** All good stories have these three elements:
 - *A Setting:* where and when the story takes place
 - *A Character:* who the story is about
 - *A Character's Want:* something that creates action in the story because the character tries to get it or make it happen
 - A TV show might have several settings, characters, and characters' wants over the course of many episodes. They might change over time to make the show more fun and surprising!
- Today we are going to think about what kinds of Settings, Characters, and Wants we might like to see in a TV show, and create a whole deck of ideas to have right at our fingertips any time we want to write a story.

2. Play the Story:

"The Adventures of Harold Jordan" by a 9 year-old from Iowa named Phoebe (it's the second story of the episode at approximately 22:09).

- **Introduce the story to students:** Let's listen to a story from the Story Pirates Podcast called "The Adventures of Harold Jordan" by a 9 year-old from Iowa named Phoebe. As you listen, think about what the Setting, Character, and Want are for this story.
- **Play the story:** Play the story for students
- **Discuss:** What were the Setting, Character, and Want?
 - *Setting:* Hollywood, present day!
 - *Character:* Harold Jordan, a celebrity actor known for being perfect
 - *Want:* to succeed on his new TV show so that he could keep being "the world's most perfect celebrity"

3) MiniLesson: Elements of the deck

- **Explain:** That brings us to our project today: making a story deck! Harold Jordan had to do a TV show...without even knowing what the TV show was supposed to be about! We are going to make a deck of ideas we can use whenever we want to write a story, so we never have to be in that situation!
- **Deck Elements:** Our deck is going to have three different kinds of cards that represent the building blocks of a story. We've already talked about them:
 - *A Setting:* where and when the story takes place
 - *A Character:* who the story is about
 - *A Character's Want:* something that creates action in the story because the character tries to get it or make it happen
- **Deck Setup:** We are each going to come up with (at least) one Setting, Character and Want and put them on index cards. When we collect all our cards, we will have a whole deck we can use any time we want to write a story that will be a combination of all of our ideas. We could even use these cards to create our own ideas for TV shows!

- Pass out index cards to students: Each student should have at least 3 cards, so they can each contribute one Setting, one Character, and one Want to the classroom deck. If you want to do more than one each—great! It might be helpful to have students have cards in multiples of three so you can have a balanced deck with an equal number of cards in each category.
- Instruct students to get out markers or crayons. Something with three colors: green, red, and blue. You'll use these to color code the cards for easy reference: green will be for Settings, blue for Characters, and red for Wants.

4) Group Practice: “We Do”: Brainstorming Deck Ideas

- Now that everyone has cards and markers, it's time to brainstorm ideas by category and make the deck!
- **Setting:** The setting is the place and time that a story takes place. For example, in “The Adventures of Harold Jordan,” the setting was Hollywood in the present day. That means right now! We have Permission to Get Weird, so when we create settings, we can make them real places like Hollywood or imaginary places like inside a candle factory in Sculpopia.
 - Brainstorm a list of possible settings on the board with your students. You can incorporate settings from books you have read together in class and time periods you may have studied together
 - When you have a few, make a sample card. On the blank back side of the index card, write a big “S” in green marker. Then, on the front lined side, write a description of the setting.
 - Example: “Hollywood, 2021”
 - You can make cards for several of the Settings you brainstormed! You can have students make their own Setting cards at this point, or have them do it later in the lesson.
- **Character:** The character is who the story is about. For example, in “The Adventures of Harold Jordan,” the character is Harold Jordan, a famous movie star. When we come up with characters, they can be anything: a person, an animal, even a thing--we have Permission to Get Weird!
 - Brainstorm a list of possible characters on the board with your students. You can come up with names of characters, say what they are, and give them characteristics or personality traits.
 - When you have a few, make a sample card. On the blank back side of the index card, write a big “C” in blue marker. Then, on the front lined side, write a description of the character
 - Example: Harold Jordan, the most perfect celebrity in the world
 - You can make cards for several of the characters you brainstormed! You can have students make their own character cards at this point, or have them do it later in the lesson.
- **Want:** The want is something that drives the action and plot of the story. It can be a thing the character wants, like “a magical amulet”; or an experience they want to have, like “to go bungee jumping.” For example, in “The Adventures of Harold Jordan,” the character's want is “to remain perfect and successful on a new TV show.”
 - Brainstorm a list of possible wants on the board with your students. You could reference the settings and characters to help. Ask students what different characters you've already come up with might want, or what

someone might want in a certain setting. You still have Permission to Get Weird, though—the wants don't have to correspond to other parts of the story you've already done.

- When you have a few, make a sample card. On the blank back side of the index card, write a big “W” in red marker. Then, on the front lined side, write a description of the want.
 - Example: To be a perfect actor in a TV show
- You can make cards for several of the wants you brainstormed!

5) Independent Practice: “You Do”

- Have students make their own cards for Setting, Character, and Want using the process above. Remind them that they have Permission to Get Weird!
- *Note:* They can make sets of three that “make sense” together, but they don't need to feel constrained by that. The ultimate goal is to have a large deck of possibilities that will work together almost in a Mad Libs-style. By mixing up our cards, we might end up with stories that take place in the Old West about a shy Alien named Garp who wants to become a circus performer...and that would be awesome!

6) Sharing:

- You can have students share some of their individual cards for each category as you collect them all into a classwide shared deck.

7) Using the Deck:

- Compile all the cards into a deck, keeping the different categories separate. Shuffle the cards in each category, and then pick one from each category to outline the concept for a story or TV show. Some of them might be pretty weird, but that's the fun part!
- **Writing a Story:** As a choice activity or for homework, students can pick a Setting, Character, and Want from the deck and write a story of any length with those characteristics.
- **Writing a TV Show pitch:** You can also have students write a one paragraph “pitch” for a TV show using their three cards. It can just be a one paragraph blurb that describes the setup for a TV show with the premise that uses their Setting, Character, and Want. They can even make posters for their TV shows and present them to the class! Alternatively, they can present the TV show idea in commercial form, and explain that “coming this fall” is a new silly TV show!

Theater Arts Extension: Act it Out!

- The Story Deck made during this lesson can be used during theater and improv exercises. Use elements of the deck by picking one or more cards as the prompt for an improv scene.
 - Setting cards can make great prompts for classwide tableaux illustrating what that place would look like
 - Character and Want cards set students up for dynamic improvised monologues
 - Pairs of students can play an interview-style game where one student draws a character and a want, and the other students interviews the character
- Playwriting students can also use combinations of cards as prompts for short written scenes or monologues