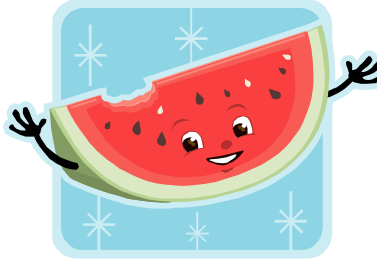


Small Moment Stories and Personal Narratives



Small Moment Story- a story that zooms in on one tiny moment. For instance, a student would write about going on a ride at Disneyworld, rather than the whole trip to Disney)

Personal Narrative- a story told in first person, a true account or memory, this can be several connected smaller moments (e.g. a sleepover, a camping trip)

This is where grade level instruction becomes more specific. This is also one a more challenging writing genres. Students should work on this after nonfiction and how-to writing.

Language Elements for Learners Taught in This Unit:

- ✓ oral language development
- ✓ vocabulary (e.g. number words, elapsed time words, weather)
- ✓ sequence words and sequencing
- ✓ action words (verbs)
- ✓ adverbs
- ✓ verb tense

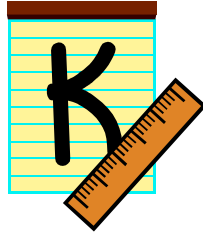
- ✓ voice (first person) and verb tense
- ✓ subject and verb agreement
- ✓ nouns (places, people)
- ✓ setting words (days of the week, month, places)

- ✓ pronouns and subject agreement
- ✓ imperative sentence structure
- ✓ periods and punctuation usage
- ✓ capitalization
- ✓ retelling language (retelling the beginning, middle and end of stories)

Kindergarten- can do a personal narratives unit prior to starting small moments

First Grade- small moments

Second Grade- can choose to begin with small moments during the launching stage (unit 1) if students have had this type of writing the previous year and then cross into personal narratives (connected small moments)



Kindergartners begin with personal narratives BEFORE small moments stories.

The main goals for kindergartners in this study are:

- generating a true story from one's life
- using vague representational drawings
- DRAWING AND THINKING about a story in a sequence (first, next, at the end)
- orally TELLING stories that sound like stories while pointing to their pictures
- Lots of labels! You want kindergartners to label everything they can!

Possible Personal Narrative Mentor Texts:

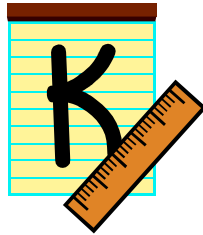
Kitten's First Full Moon by Kevin Henkes

Sweet Treats by Kevin Henkes

Roller Coaster by Marla Frazee

Peter's Chair by Ezra Jack Keats

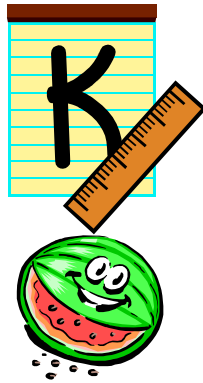
The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats
Knuffle Bunny by Mo Willems
More! More! More! Said the Baby by Vera B. Williams



Things to Emphasize in Personal Narrative
Read-Alouds to Kindergartners

- Notice how the characters "say" things in the story and talk to each other (dialogue). Imagine what their voices sound like.
- Sequence (retell as a group what happened first, next, at the end)
- What do you think happened in the writer's life that helped him/her to write this story?
- details in the drawings

- the characters have names



The main goals for kindergartners in this small moments unit of study are:

- to generate a tiny moment story from one's life (not a watermelon story, big topic but a seed story, smaller topic)
- to use vague representational drawings
- **DRAWING AND THINKING** about a story in a sequence (first, next, at the end) using booklets
- "sketch to stretch", sketching the story first (helps to retain the sequence)
- continued labeling with stretching beginning sounds for additional words
- using some details in the writing (feelings, color, names)

Possible Small Moment Mentor Texts:

Kitten's First Full Moon by Kevin Henkes

Sweet Treats by Kevin Henkes

Roller Coaster by Marla Frazee

Peter's Chair by Ezra Jack Keats

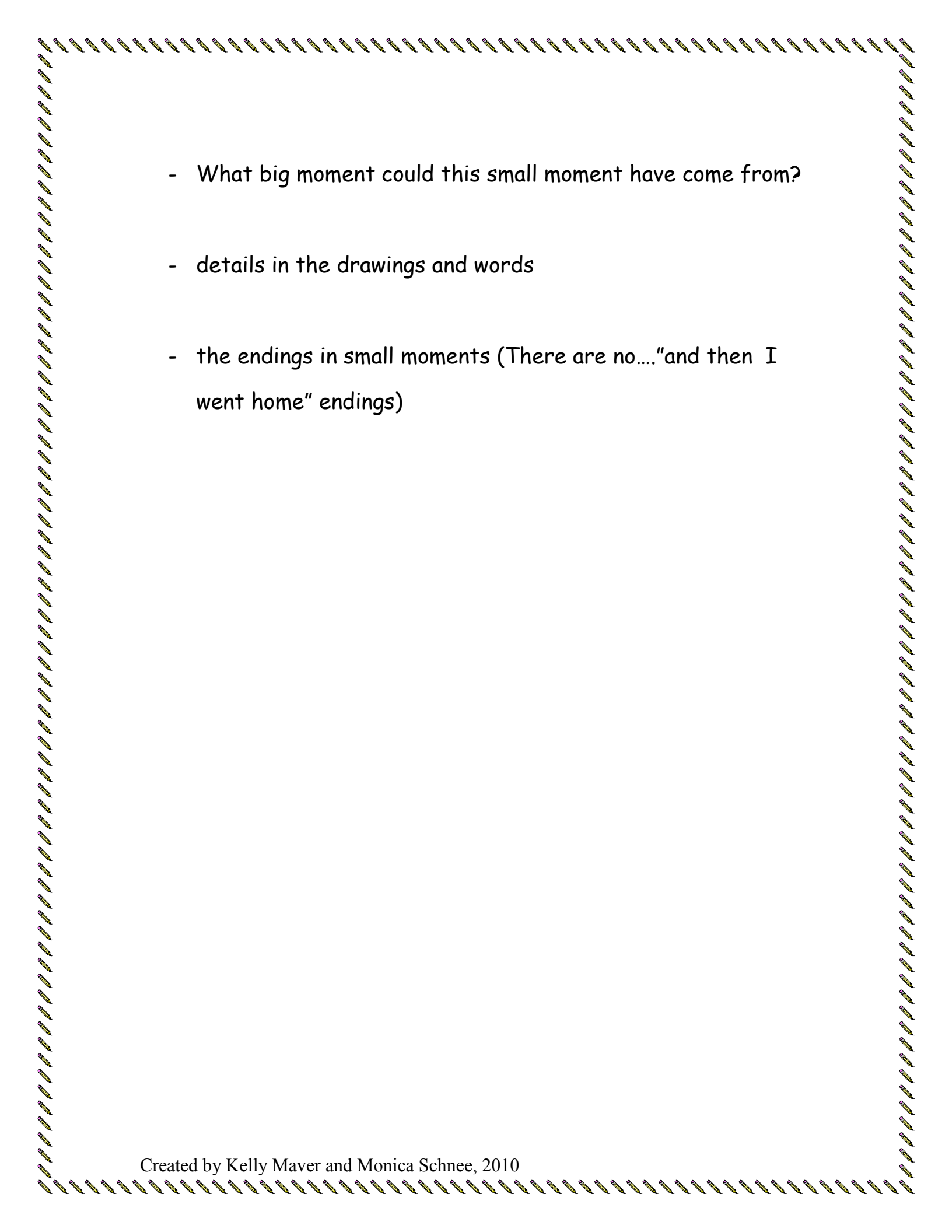
Knuffle Bunny by Mo Willems

Mrs. Wishy Washy series by Joy Cowley



Things to Emphasize in Small Moment
Read-Alouds to Kindergartners

- Notice how the characters "say" things in the story and talk to each other (dialogue).
- Sequence (retell as a group what happened first, next, at the end)

- 
- What big moment could this small moment have come from?
 - details in the drawings and words
 - the endings in small moments (There are no...“and then I went home” endings)



Main goals for first graders in a small moments unit of study:

- generating a true story from one's life
- to value a tiny moment from one's life
- "zooming in" (focusing on the small things)
- stretching a moment across the pages
- showing through feelings through actions and expressions
- dialogue (speech balloons)
- picturing a story like a movie in one's mind

Possible Small Moment Mentor Texts:

Kitten's First Full Moon by Kevin Henkes

Sweet Treats by Kevin Henkes

Roller Coaster by Marla Frazee

Peter's Chair by Ezra Jack Keats

Salt Hands by Jane Chelsea Aragon

Knuffle Bunny by Mo Willems

Shortcut by Donald Crews

Fireflies by Judy Brinckloe

The Paperboy by Dav Pilkey

excerpt from The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn that describes
Chester's mother's kiss traveling through to his heart

Things to Emphasize in Small Moment
Read-Alouds to First Graders

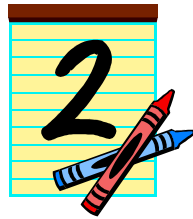


- discuss what the big moment was that the small moment story came from
- sequence (retell as a group what happened first, next, then and at the end)

- how authors use actions to show feelings

Example: The author didn't just tell us, "I was happy." Instead of telling us the author showed us, "I was jumping up and down with the world's biggest smile stretched across my face!"

- details (number, feeling, color, size)
- settings
- time words (first, next, at night)
- endings (no "then I went to bed" endings!)
- the use of names in the stories
- weather in the stories
- characters' facial expressions that show feelings



Main goals for second graders in this small moment/personal narrative unit of study are:

- generating a true story from one's life
- to value a tiny moment from one's life
- stretching a moment across the pages
- showing through feelings through actions rather than telling
- dialogue (speech balloons and quotation marks)

- playing your story like a movie in your mind

Possible Small Moment (SM) and Personal Narrative Mentor Texts:

select stories from Frog and Toad by Arnold Lobel (SM)

Salt Hands by Jane Chelsea Aragon (SM)

Roller Coaster by Marla Frazee (SM)

Owl Moon by Cynthia Rylant (SM)

The Relatives Came by Ezra Jack Keats (connected small moments)

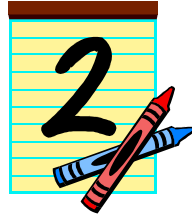
A Chair for My Mother by Vera B. Williams (connected small moments)

Shortcut by Donald Crews (SM)

The Paperboy by Dav Pilkey (SM)

Fireflies by Julie Brinckloe (SM)

Things to Emphasize in Small Moment/Personal Narrative
Read-Alouds to Second Graders



- discuss what the big moment was that the small moment story came from
- words that describe the setting throughout the book
- how authors show feelings through characters' expressions and actions

Example: The author didn't just tell us , "I was happy." Instead of telling us the author showed us, "I was jumping up and down with the world's biggest smile stretched across my face!"

- details (number, feeling, color, size, thought, weather, time)
- how authors can show thinking through thought balloons
- time words (first, next, at night)

- endings (no "then I went to bed" endings!)
- tiny actions characters do (e.g, push in a chair, brush their hair back)

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY 'ADD MORE DETAILS'?"



Structure Words for Inspiring Elaboration and Details

What

Size - can be similes

Color

Number

Shape

Where

Movement- what you saw, did, noticed

Mood- feeling and reason, good ending detail

Background- everything around you

Perspective

Sound

Weather

Dialogue

