

Language Study Lesson Plan

Grade Level: 6

Length: Approximately 30 minutes

Text: *A Wizard of Earthsea* by Ursula K. Le Guin

Mentor Sentence: “My lady, that spirit is sealed in a stone, and the stone is locked by binding-spell and blinding-spell and charm of lock and ward and triple fortress-walls in a barren land, not because it is precious, but because it can work great evil.” (Le Guin, 1968, p. 136)

Note: This mentor sentence is from a few pages into chapter 7 of the novel. Ideally, this lesson would happen following the reading of this chapter as the book is being used as a read aloud. If the whole book is not being read, a page before and after the sentence could be read to gain students’ interest.

Lesson:

1. After reading part of or the whole chapter, return to the mentor sentence on page 136. Write the sentence on the whiteboard and read it with the students.
2. Ask students what they notice about the sentence. Provide time for Think-Pair-Share of what they notice.
 - a. Things they may notice include the commons, the list of noun phrases in the middle chunk, the two uses of “because,” and more.
 - b. While students are discussing with each other, circulate the room listening to the discussions.
3. Break down the sentence into chunks on the white board. Discuss if any of the chunks are sentences on their own.
 - a. Breakdown: “My lady,/ that spirit is sealed in a stone,/ and the stone is locked by binding-spell and blinding-spell and charm of lock and ward and triple fortress-walls in a barren land,/ not because it is precious,/ but because it can work great evil.”
 - b. The underlined chunk is the only one that could be a complete sentence as it is.
 - c. The chunk after it, starting with “and the stone is locked,” could be a complete sentence if the first “and” was removed.
4. Ask students if there is a chunk that could be removed and there still be a complete sentence.

- a. The third chunk, starting with “and the stone is locked,” could be removed and the rest still be a sentence. The remaining part would be “My lady, that spirit is sealed in a stone, not because it is precious, but because it can work great evil.”
 - b. How does taking that chunk out change the sentence? Is the mood the same? Does it seem as evil when the details of how locked away it is are removed? Which sentence is better? Allow students to discuss with a partner before sharing. The chunk provides more details.
 - c. Ask students if they think there is another chunk that could be removed that would still leave a complete sentence.
 - d. The chunk that states “not because it is precious” could be taken out, but for the remainder to be a complete sentence, the remaining “but” would need to be removed. This means it is different than the first chunk removed.
 - e. Invite students to consider what the chunks we took out is doing in the sentence. The ideal answer is that it is interrupting the sentence.
5. Discuss how when we speak, there are often detours we take during individual thoughts that provide more details in the middle of our sentences. This is also done in writing to create interest, rhythm, emphasis, and variety.
6. Introduce the focus phrase: “I enclose interrupters in commas.”
 - a. Mark the interrupter in the sentence (“and the stone is locked...”).
7. Invite students to form their own sentence that has an interrupter.
 - a. They can come up with their own sentence or use the mentor sentence as a template: “My lady, that spirit is sealed in a stone, _____, not because it is precious, but because it can work great evil.”
8. Circulate the room as students are working on their practice sentences that have an interrupter. They may discuss their sentences with their partners for feedback. Give suggestions to students as needed.
9. Invite students to share their sentences with the class. Discuss the interrupters contained in the sentences. They can read the sentence both with and without the interrupter to show the difference.

References:

- Anderson, Jeff; Leech, Travis; & Clark, Melinda. (2021). *Patterns of Power, Grades 6–8: Inviting Adolescent Writers Into the Conventions of Language*. Routledge. pp. 201-202.
- Le Guin, Ursula K. (1968) *A Wizard of Earthsea*. HarperCollins.