

## Shaun Tan's *The Arrival*-cultural empathy, shared story telling, writing

**Grade Level:** 3-8

**Subject:** English / Composition

**Length of Time:** 40 min.

**Objectives and Outcomes:** Students will use meta-cognition and collaborative storytelling to create a narrative.

**Assessment and Evaluation:** Students will write letters as a character they have created.

### Materials Needed:

- copies of pictures from "The Arrival"

**Warm-Up:** Fruit Salad to mix students into the groups you would like them to be in, then put them into groups of four.

### Procedure:

1. Ask students if they ever believed something as a child, then when they grew older they knew it wasn't what they thought it was, but something their childlike mind was making sense of.
  - a. e.g. the light of the furnace in the basement was monster eyes or the blinking red lights on top of radio towers are Rudolph.
  - b. Show students the picture of the old woman and little girl, with what looks like monster tentacles and ask the groups to decide what they think it is. Tell them this is from the little girl's perspective and it is not a *monster*.
  - c. One of groups will come up with war. Ask students if that's what it could be.
2. Each group sits in a circle on the floor. They are given five pictures and are told they are not in a correct order.
  - a. Show students the picture of the old woman and little girl, with what looks like monster tentacles and ask the groups to decide what they think it is. Tell them this is from the little girl's perspective and it is not a *monster*.
  - b. One of groups will come up with war. Ask students if that's what it could be.
  - c. Each group needs to create a story from the pictures. Which comes first? Who are the people in the pictures? What are their names?
3. When students have the pictures in the order that makes sense to their story, ask one person to stay behind as the host. The host will invite people to sit down and then will tell the story from that group's perspective.
  - a. If there's time before they switch to the next group, they can ask questions.
4. Once all the groups have seen each others and are back at the original, discuss how they were similar or different. Was there an occurring theme?
5. Show the picture of the man and the woman at the table with their hands on the suitcase. Say what we don't see in the picture is the letter the man left for his family. It's something he couldn't say before he left, so he put it into writing. Tell them, it's what he wants his family to know.

- a. the beginning of the letter should read
  - i. "Dear\_\_\_\_,
  - ii. Everything's going to be alright.

**Closing:** I ask if any of the students would like me to read their letters for them. Some of them are incredibly moving. I ask them if they would like me to read it, instead of having them read it, because I want them to feel comfortable being vulnerable.

**Assessment and Evaluation:** This lesson is a powerful one, because it taps into students' empathy which is reflected in their letters.

**Modification and Differentiation:** If there is more time, students can create tableaus of the family in different stages according to the pictures.