

# ScienceTellers

## *Critical Thinking & Creative Writing Guide*

### *“Dragons: Return of the Ice Sorceress”*

#### **Section 1. Thematic Discussion**

Being a critical thinker means connecting ideas and solving problems. Although most of us have never lived in a castle, we can still use our own experiences to connect to the themes of the story and recall times when we had to solve problems.

Here are three themes, followed by questions to launch a thoughtful discussion:

#### Theme A: New Places

Henry and Beth like to sneak around the castle and explore new places. Later, they venture up the mountains and explore the dragon’s cave.

1. Think about a time you went somewhere new. Where was it? How did you get there? Who were you with?
2. What did you like about the new place? What did you not like? Did anything go wrong, or not as planned? If so, how did you solve the problem?
3. What did you learn from visiting this new place? If you went back, what would you do differently?

## Theme B: Facing Your Fears

Henry and Beth go looking for the dragon to ask it for help. Later, they confront the Ice Sorceress themselves.

1. Think about a time you had to do something that scared you. Where were you? Who were you with? What were you afraid of?
2. What did you *think* would happen? What *actually* happened?
3. What did you learn from your experience? Are you still scared? Would you do it again? Why is it OK to be scared of some things?

## Theme C: Solving Problems

Henry and Beth try a few ways to stop the Ice Sorceress. Eventually they figure out how to do it, and they return the kingdom to normal.

1. Think about a time you solved a difficult problem. Where were you? Who were you with? What was the problem?
2. What steps did you take to solve it? What worked? What didn't? What was the result of your actions?
3. Were there any new problems as a result? What did you learn from your experience? What steps will you take next time you have to solve a difficult problem?

## Section 2. Creative Writing (“Story Spine”)

*Teacher and author Kenn Adams developed the “story spine” as a tool to help writers structure their ideas and develop stories. Individually or as a group, fill in the blanks to create your own story spine. It can be about a dragon, sorceress and a king or queen — or you can make it about your own personal experience: either a time you visited a new place, faced your fears or solved a difficult problem.*

**Once upon a time there was** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Every day,** \_\_\_\_\_.

**One day,** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Because of this,** \_\_\_\_\_.

**And because of that,** \_\_\_\_\_.

**Until finally,** \_\_\_\_\_.

**And ever since then,** \_\_\_\_\_.

Here is an example, using the story you heard during the assembly:

***Once upon a time there were*** two brave kids named Henry and Beth. ***Every day,*** they would sneak around the castle. ***One day,*** they discovered an ice sorceress freezing everything in the kingdom. ***Because of this,*** they headed into the mountains to find the dragon. ***And because of that,*** the dragon was frozen by the ice sorceress. ***Until finally,*** Henry and Beth discovered that salt could melt through ice. ***And ever since then,*** Henry, Beth and the dragon guarded the kingdom.

Once you have the structure of your story, it’s time to develop it! Expand upon your ideas, using your story spine as the building blocks. Consider adding more characters and obstacles along the way to make your story more interesting. Be sure your story includes a problem (conflict) and a solution.