



Lesson Plan Summary

Magic Tree House #30: Haunted Castle on Hallows Eve

Writing Suspenseful Short Stories

<p>EACH STUDENT WILL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a short story based on story elements found in a variety of Magic Tree House books.• Investigate the elements of a short story through class discussions and digital sources and apply this knowledge to a writing assignment.• Work in a cooperative group to gather information needed for writing a short story.• Use various sources of information gained from prior reading assignments as a resource for writing a short story.• Share short stories with classmates and others.	<p>COMMON CORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED:</p> <p>(The standard for one grade level is explained. The codes for applicable grade levels are listed.)</p> <p>WRITING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Text Types and Purposes: W3.3, W4.3, W5.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. (W4.3)• Production and Distribution of Writing: W3.4, W4.4, W5.4 Produce clear and coherent writing (including multiple paragraph text) in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (W4.4)• Research too Build and Present Knowledge: W3.8 Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories. (W3.8) <p>LANGUAGE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge of Language: L3.1, L4.1, L5.1 Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, reading, speaking, or listening. (L4.1)• Conventions of Standard English: L3.1, 4.1, 5.1 Demonstrate the commands of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking. (L4.1) <p>SPEAKING and LISTENING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comprehension and Collaboration: SL3.1, SL4.1, SL5.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade level topics and texts, building on other's ideas and expressing their own clearly. (SL3.1)
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Created By: Paula Henson, 2007 Magic Tree House Teacher of the Year, Knoxville, TN



Lesson Plan

Magic Tree House #30: Haunted Castle on Hallows Eve

Writing Suspenseful Short Stories



Haunted Tales from the Castle

At the end of Haunted Castle on Hallows Eve in a section called “*A Note from the Author*” Mary Pope Osborne explains that her writing is often inspired by fairy tales, legends and poetry she has read from around the world. Many of her characters in Haunted Castle on Hallows Eve are based on these old stories. She blended the elements of these stories together as she created her own story of Jack and Annie’s adventures in a haunted castle.

Students will enjoy creating their own suspenseful stories in this writing activity that will take them down Magic Tree House memory lane as they blend together many of the stories they have read to create “Haunted Tales from the Castle”!

Materials:

- Classroom copies of Haunted Castle on Hallows Eve
- Access to copies of Magic Tree house books your class wishes to include in this project
- Construction paper (12 x 18: 1 sheet per child for displaying castle story elements), (9 x 12: 3 sheets assorted colors per child for castle shapes)
- Scissors
- Access to a copy machine that will accommodate making copies on construction paper
- Castle Story Shapes (included)
- Copies of castle-themed writing paper for each student (included)
- Copies of blank castle-themed paper for illustrations that will accompany stories for each student (included)
- Six containers that will hold the paper castle shapes (trays, baskets, boxes, or paper plates will work). Each container should be labeled with story elements (labels included).

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Procedure:

- Discuss with your class the five main elements of a short story and explain that these elements are present in some form in all Magic Tree House adventures. Each time a story element is discussed with students, refer back to Haunted Castle on Hallows Eve to review how descriptive words and phrases were used in the book to create mood, imagery, or build suspense (examples from the book noted in parentheses below).
 1. **Character:** A character is a person, or sometimes even an animal, who takes part in the action of a story. Of course Jack and Annie are always main characters but there are a host of other characters who interact with Jack and Annie that add interest and suspense to the plot. **(pages 13, 24, 50, 57, 78)**
 2. **Setting:** The setting of a story is the time and place in which the story happens. Authors often use descriptions of landscape, scenery, buildings, seasons or weather to provide a strong sense of setting. This is evident in all Magic Tree House books as the settings in which the tree house lands are described in great detail and often carried throughout the books wherever Jack and Annie's missions lead them. **(pages 6,7, 16, 17, 27)**
 3. **Plot:** A plot is a series of events and character actions that relate to the central conflict. In the world of Magic Tree House, the plot is the mission that Jack and Annie are trying to accomplish or the mystery they must solve and the conflicts they encounter along the way. **(pages 55, 56, 70, 73, 79-81)**
 4. **Conflict:** The conflict is a struggle between two people or things in a short story. The main character is usually on one side of the conflict. There is always a conflict in Magic Tree House books that usually involve some sort of villain who makes it difficult for Jack and Annie to complete their mission. **(chapter 11)**
 5. **Theme:** The theme is the central idea or belief in a short story. In Magic Tree House books the theme involves the source of magic given to Jack and Annie and the source of help that comes to their aid (usually in the form of a human or animal) that allows them to complete their mission. There is always a common lesson or morale that the reader comes away with at the end of a Magic Tree House book that centers on truth and goodness. **(pages 58-59, 87-88, chapter 12)**

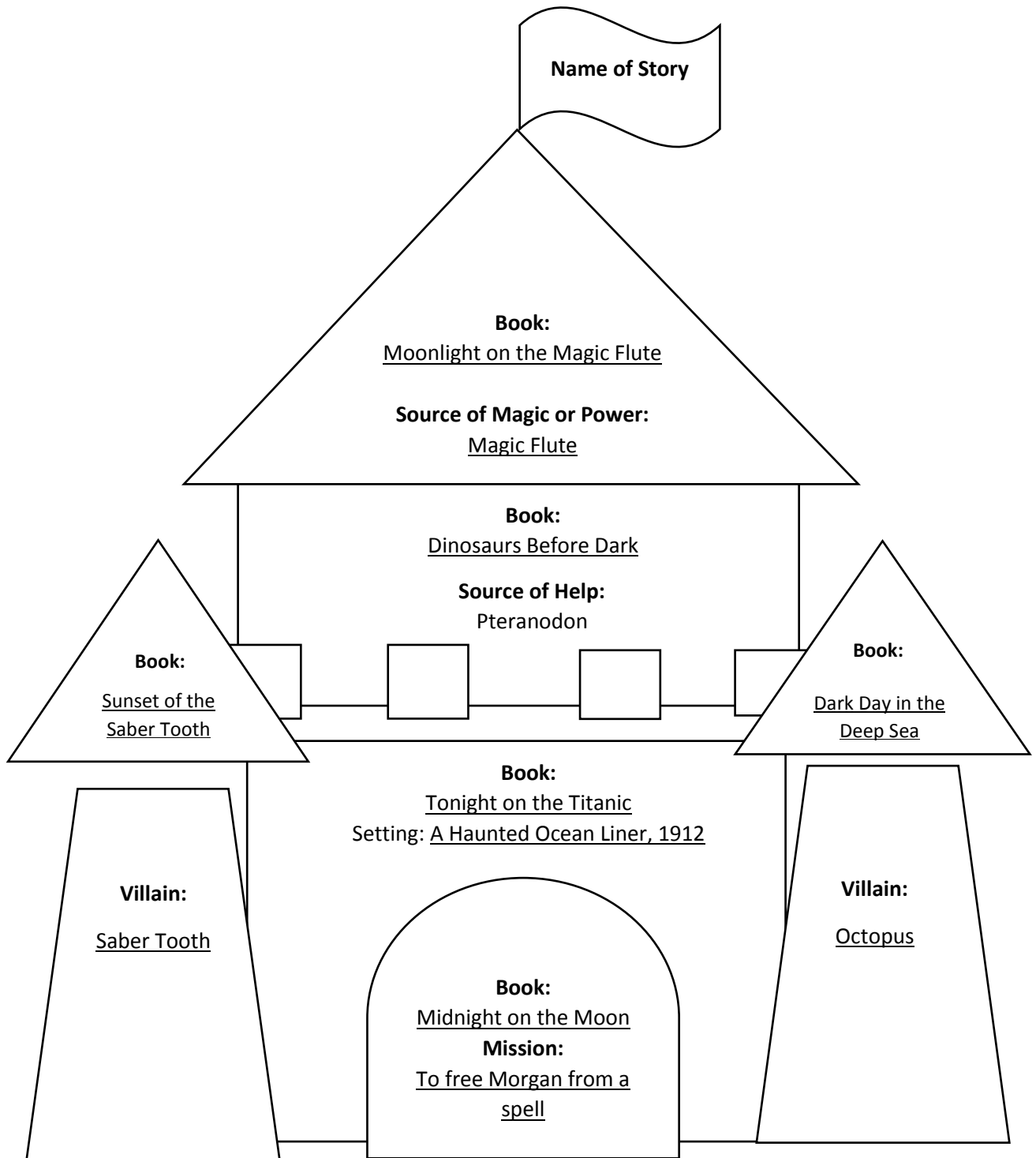
Your class will enjoy these entertaining videos about the five elements of a short story. The first one is geared for younger students while the second video might be more suitable for grades four and five:

<http://www.watchknowlearn.org/Video.aspx?VideoID=15959&CategoryID=5236>

<https://www.flocabulary.com/fivethings/>

- Read Haunted Castle on Hallows Eve with your class, taking extra time to examine the section at the end of the book, “*A Note from the Author*”. Lead a class discussion in how Mary Pope Osborne got the ideas for the elements in the book. Conclude that her ideas came from a variety other stories and poems she has read.
- Explain to your students that they will be writing a short story about a suspenseful or haunted adventure that Jack and Annie will have, but their story elements will come from a combination of other Magic Tree House books they and their classmates have read. Explain that they will be swapping story elements with classmates to create their stories. They will work together as a class to “build” their story “castles” before they write their haunted tales.
- Give each child copies of the castle shapes (included). Ask them to write the title of one Magic Tree House book they have read on each shape in the space provided and fill in the blanks on each castle shape with the particular element from each book they chose. They will need copies of the Magic Tree House books they choose available for reference. Explain that they will not be using their own castle shapes/story elements to write their stories but will later be exchanging ideas and shapes with classmates.

Below is an example of how students will fill in their shapes with the information they will need to create their stories. Explain that since the villain in Haunted House on Hallows Eve was two characters in one (half bird/half human) they will use this same technique to create a character that will present a problem for Jack and Annie as they try to accomplish their mission in the stories they write. They will need to select two book titles to create their villainous character. For example, the character in the example below would be half saber tooth/half octopus. Students will enjoy illustrating these two-faceted creatures when they are developing their stories and combining the elements from familiar stories to create new haunted stories of their own! Create an example such as the one below to share with your class:



Name of Story

Book:
Moonlight on the Magic Flute

Source of Magic or Power:
Magic Flute

Book:
Dinosaurs Before Dark

Source of Help:
Pteranodon

Book:
Sunset of the
Saber Tooth

Book:
Dark Day in the
Deep Sea

Book:
Tonight on the Titanic
Setting: A Haunted Ocean Liner, 1912

Villain:
Saber Tooth

Villain:
Octopus

Book:
Midnight on the Moon
Mission:
To free Morgan from a
spell

Explain that the story represented in this example would have the following elements:

Setting: *The tree house lands on a haunted ocean liner in the year 1912.*

Plot: *Jack and Annie's mission is to free Morgan from a spell that*

_____.

Plot/Theme: *Their source of magic is a magic flute that will give them the power to* _____.

Conflict/Character: *They encounter a villain that is half saber tooth and half octopus who tries to* _____.

Plot/Theme: *They receive help from a pteranodon and are then able to*

_____.

Ask students the following questions about this story reminding them that they will be adding details to these basic elements in their own haunted stories:

- What would be an attention-getting name for this haunted tale?
- How would you fill in the blanks with interesting details that would create suspense and hold the reader's attention
- What descriptive words could be used to describe the setting and the villain?
- What would be a good ending for this story?

Tell them that they will build their haunted stories around elements found in various Magic Tree House books they have read just as Mary Pope Osborne developed the story line for Haunted House on Hallows Eve from ideas she read about in old stories, myths, legends and poems.

- Next, have the students cut out the castle shapes and bring them to a large group setting in your classroom to take part in a fun story element-swapping activity as they “build” their haunted tales from the castle! This activity would best be carried out by having your students sit in a large circle on an area rug. Remind students that they will be swapping castle shapes with classmates and creating stories based on a variety of ideas supplied by others.
- You will need to have six containers (trays, baskets, boxes or paper plates) in which students will place their shapes positioned in the middle of the group labeled with the following story elements (labels included):

Story Elements

1. Setting

Where and in what time period does the tree house land? How can descriptive words help to create the scene and the mood for a suspenseful story?

2. Mission (Plot)

What are Jack and Annie trying to accomplish? What was lost or stolen that they are trying to find or who are they trying to help or rescue?

3. Villain (Character/Conflict)

4. Villain (Character/Conflict)

Note: Two containers for the villain will be needed because their villain will be two-faceted just as the Raven King in the book was half bird, half human. They will create their villain from characters from two separate Magic Tree House books. The villain always presents a conflict for Jack and Annie.

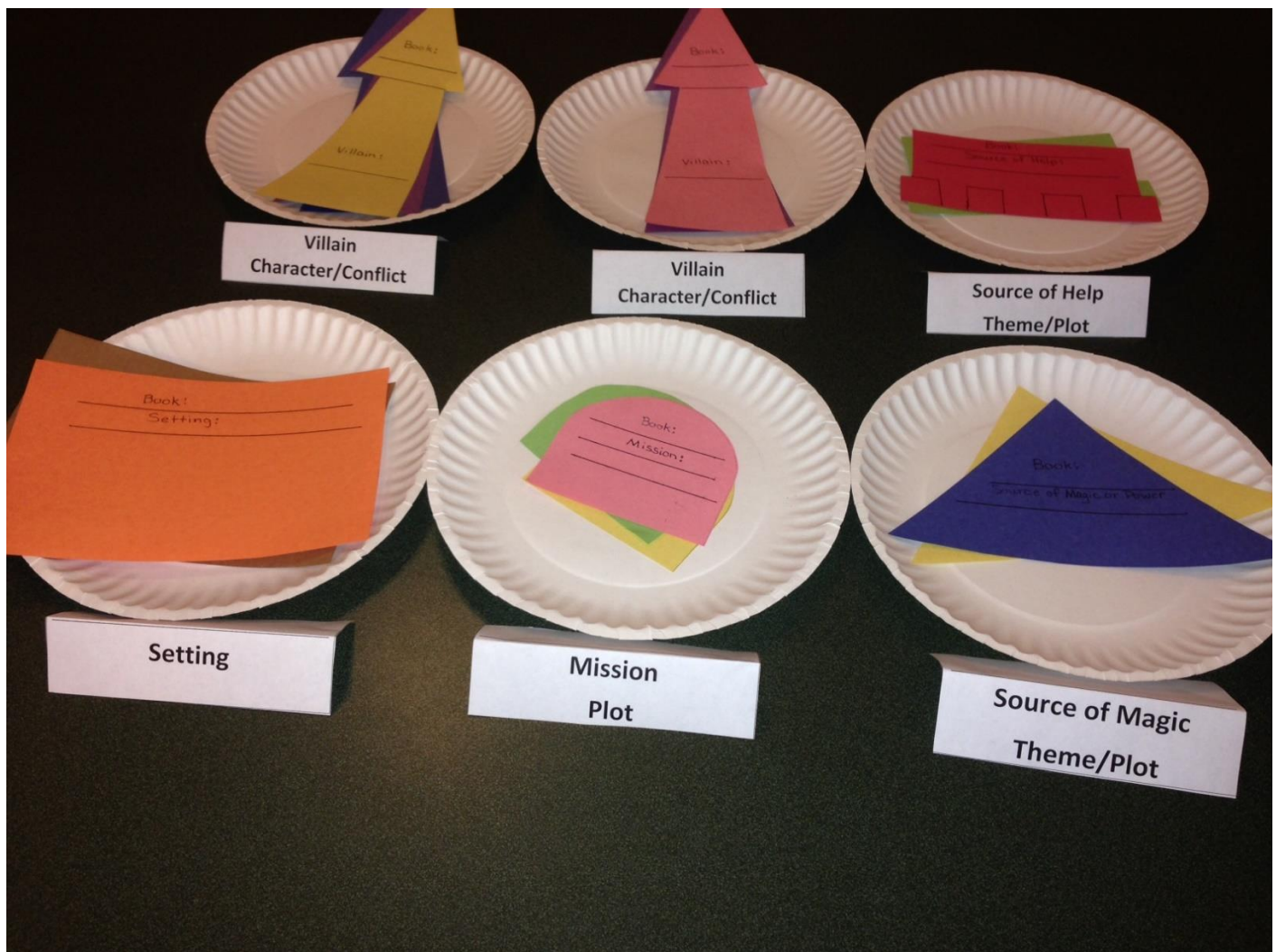
5. Source of Magic/Power (Theme/Plot)

What magic or power is given to Jack and Annie to help them accomplish their mission? How do they use it for good?

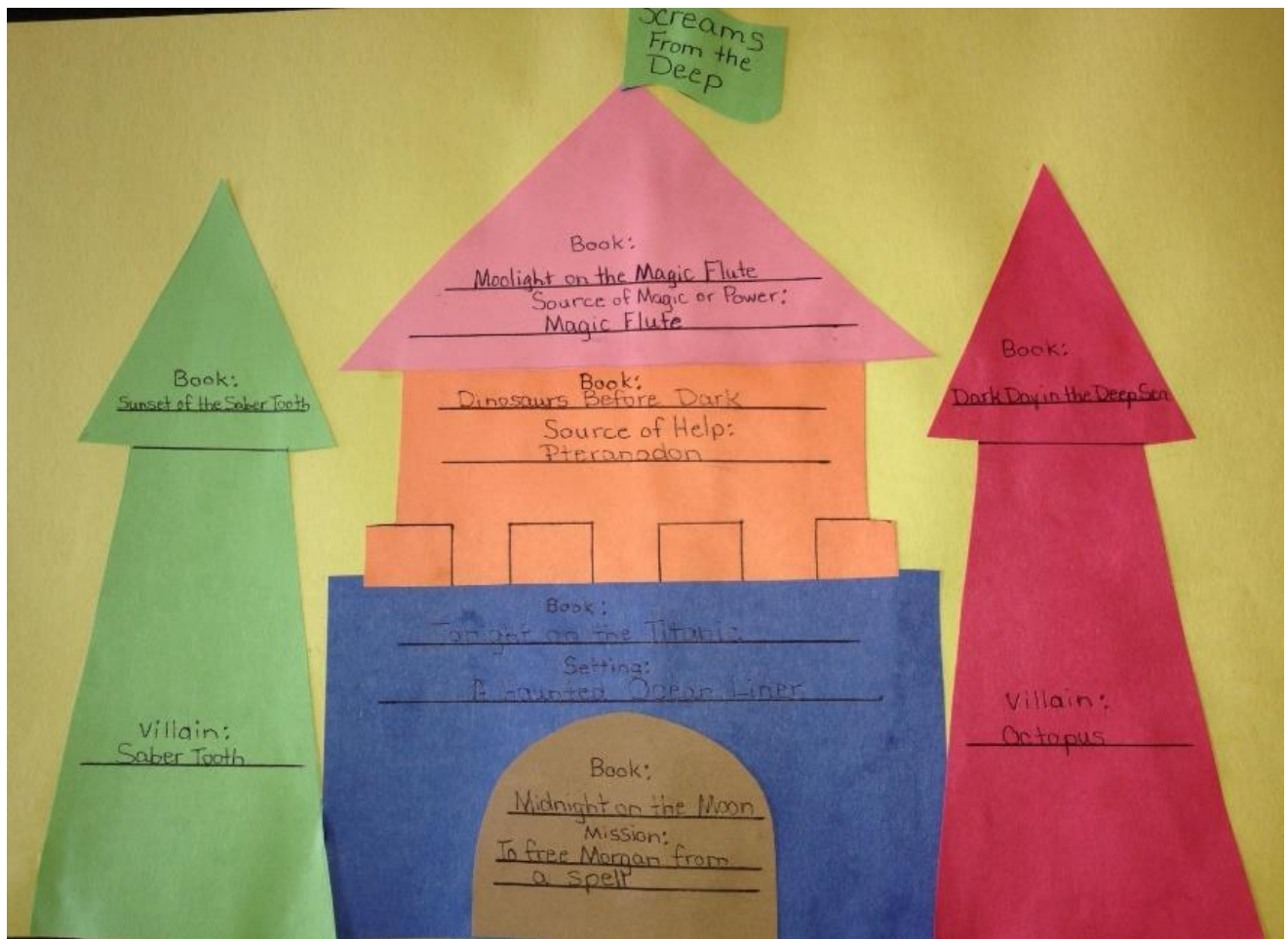
6. Source of Help (Theme/Plot)

How did Jack and Annie receive help, from whom or from what source?

- Next, have students place all like shapes together in one of each of the six containers and label each container accordingly (labels included) as shown.



- Students should then randomly choose one shape (not their own) from each of the six containers and build their haunted story castles on a separate larger (12 x 18) sheet of construction or manila paper as shown:



- After students have completed their castle and have listed the story elements they will use on the castle they may begin to develop their stories on the castle story paper (included). They may draw illustrations to accompany their stories on the blank castle paper (included.)

Labels

Cut out and fold on center line to use as labels for story elements

Setting

Mission

Plot

Villain

Character/Conflict

Villain
Character/Conflict

Source of Magic
Theme/Plot

Source of Help
Theme/Plot

Castle Shapes

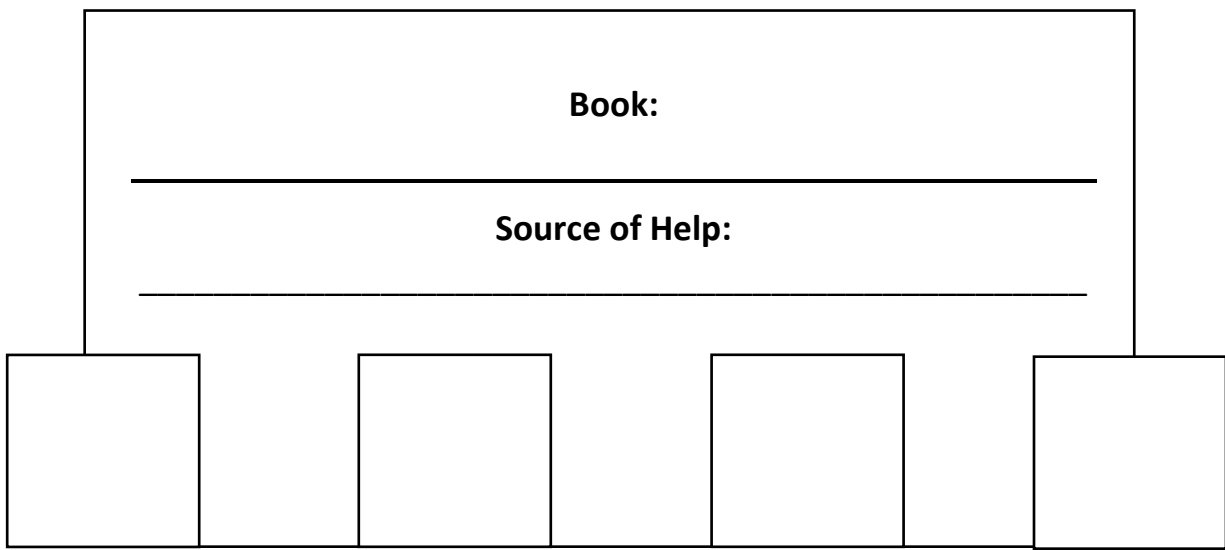
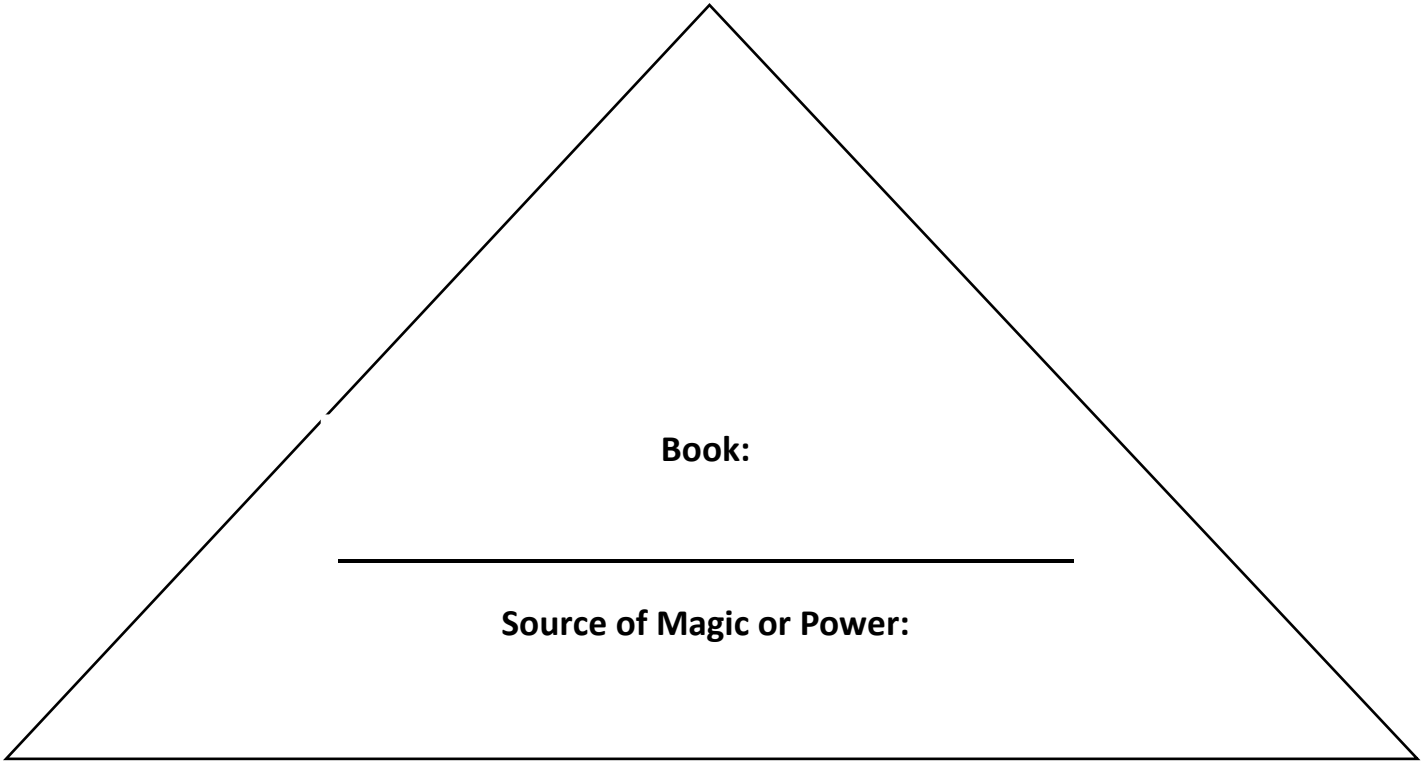
Cut out the castle shapes after filling in the blanks with the titles and story elements of Magic Tree House books you have read.

Book:

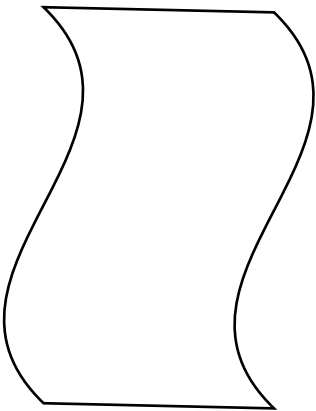
Setting:

Book:

Mission:



Write the title of your story on the flag shape and place at the top of your castle.

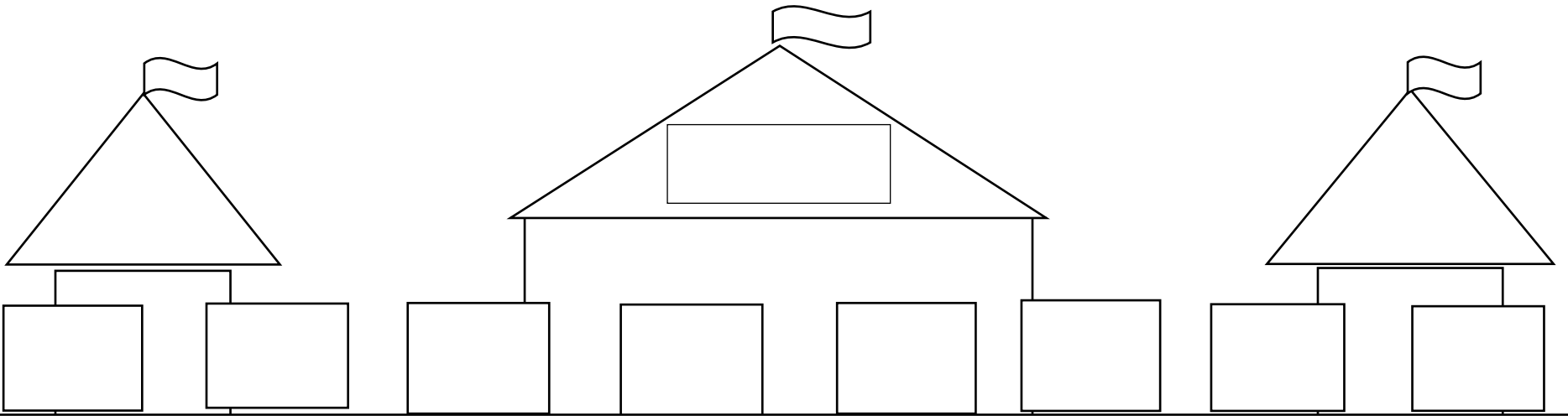


Book:

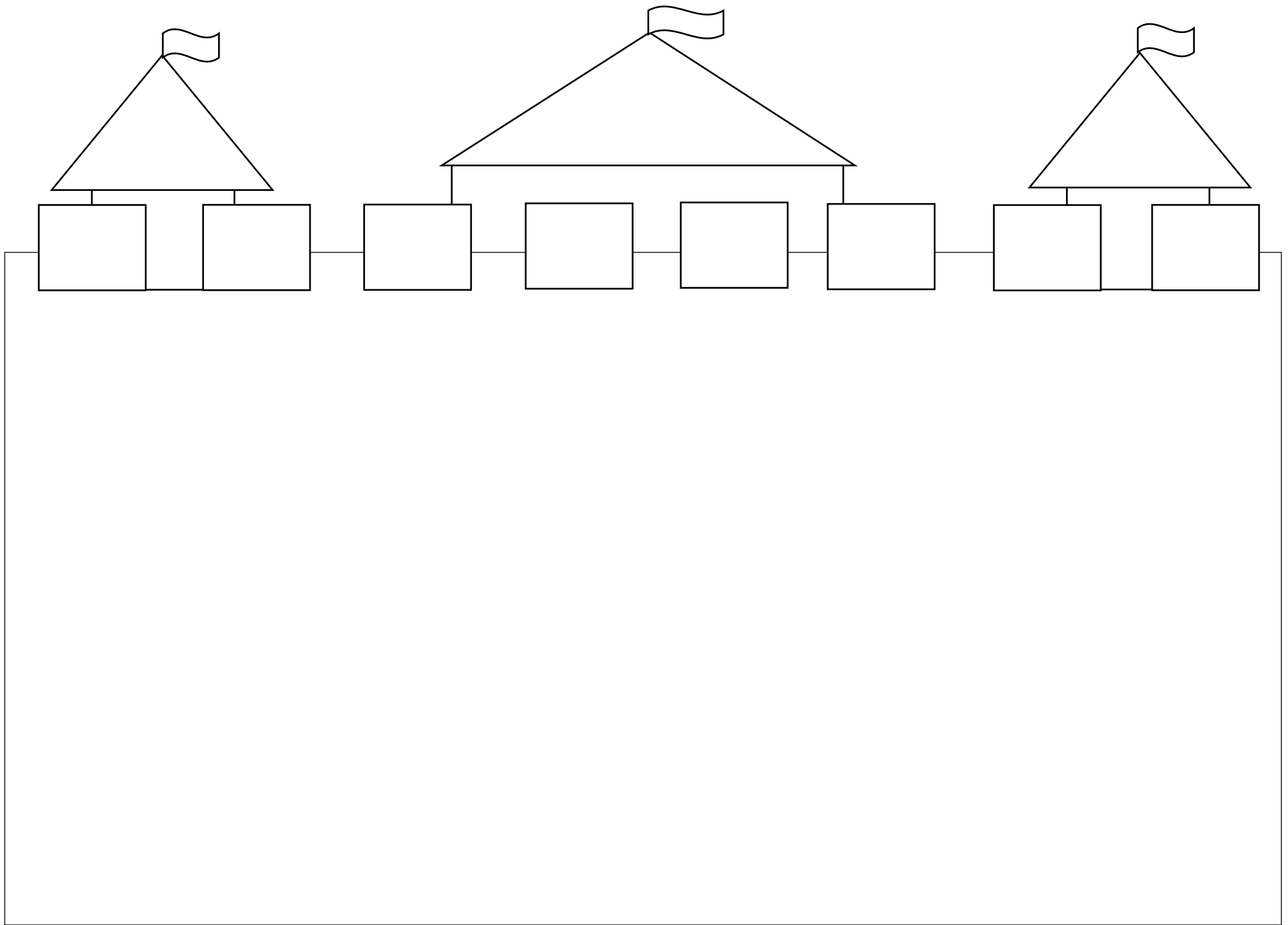
Book:

Villain:

Villain:



A large rectangular area containing 20 horizontal lines, intended for writing.



Options for sharing class stories:

1. Students will be eager to share their haunted tales with classmates and others. After sharing in small or large groups as a class, you may choose to create a class book of Haunted Tales from the Castle to leave in your reading center and/or for students to take home during the month of October to share with their families. Bind together the collection of stories written on the castle writing paper and allow students to collaboratively design a castle-themed cover for the class book.
2. You may wish to create a bulletin board display of "Haunted Tales from the Castle" by attaching the stories your students write to the bottom of the castles they create with their story element shapes.

