What Your Colleagues Are Saying . . .

This comprehensive guide brilliantly unlocks the magic of storytelling for young minds. From crafting the first idea of a fantasy story to illustrating magical worlds, the book serves as an essential tool for budding writers and artists. Its engaging lessons on character creation, plot development, and incorporating magic into narratives not only inspire creativity but also foster a love for writing and illustration. A must-have for educators and students alike.

—Helen H. Wu
Author of *Long Goes to Dragon School* and *Tofu Takes Time*

The genre of fantasy has the power and potential to inspire young writers, engaging and inviting them into the world of storytelling by tapping into their vast imaginations and love of make-believe. Carl Anderson's book provides a navigable and welcome road map for teachers who want to offer students fantasy writing experiences, but need structure, guidance, and resources. Teachers will love the lessons, and students will love the portals into their own worlds and creations of fantasy.

—Melanie Meehan
Writing Coordinator, Author, and Consultant

Students will love Carl Anderson's book for the opportunity to create their own rich worlds. My students thrived developing characters, maps, creatures, alliances, and conflicts. Carl's book is a much-needed breath of fresh narrative air for both elementary writers and teachers.

—Tim Saunders
Elementary Educator

I had the good fortune of hosting Carl Anderson several times over the past couple of years as he piloted this work in my classroom and was amazed at how much writing students were doing, the high levels of student engagement, and the elevated quality of their writing. This book is a powerful elixir that will vanquish disengagement and ignite a love of writing within some of your most reluctant writers. And it's grab-and-go, with units, mini-lessons, mentor texts, charts, student samples, and more.

—Ryan Scala
Fifth-Grade Teacher, Springs School, East Hampton, NY

I was always fearful of teaching fantasy writing, but Carl Anderson has completely changed my views. Fantasy is now my favorite genre to teach, and my writers will agree. Children are eager to write fantasy stories and this book provides teachers with all the tools they'll need to bring these units to life.

—Emily Callahan
Teacher and Author

Teaching Fantasy Writing brims with strategies, lessons, mentor texts, and think-alouds designed to captivate and empower student writers. Reading this book is like having a mentor teacher to guide you through a genre that many teachers may not even consider yet is adored by so many students.

—Kayla Briseño
Co-Author of *Text Structures From Picture Books*

Behold, Carl Anderson's magic key for teaching what our students crave: fantasy writing. With effective, step-by-step lessons for multiple subgenres, you can follow the "Yellow Brick Road" or revise to fit the needs of your students—even learn to write and illustrate your fantasy story alongside them. Carl is my Merlin in all things fantasy; let him become yours, too!

—Katherine Bomer
Writing Consultant, K–12 and Author of *The Journey is Everything: Teaching Essays That Students Want to Write for People Who Want to Read Them*

For too long, writing fantasy in grades K–6 school has been relegated to the fringes. This book is the perfectly blended concoction of scholarship, inspiration, and practical resources that will allow fantasy to take its rightful place as a powerful driver of imagination, engagement, craft, and vocabulary growth. *Teaching Fantasy Writing* is the enchanted gift given by a magical creature (Carl Anderson) to a weary mage (you) in need of joy, light, and triumph. If you choose to accept it, be prepared for your instruction and students' writing to transform in ways you could never imagine!

—M. Colleen Cruz
Educator and Best-Selling Author of *Writers Read Better: Nonfiction*

What Students Are Saying . . .

I love writing fantasy because it can be anything you want it to be, and because I got to teach other people what they can do with their feelings.

—Alonzo
Third Grader

Writing fantasy is like stepping into a new world, where all the things of your imagination spring to life. Fantasy is much more than mere words. It's a whole new universe.

—Alyssa
Middle School Student

I love writing fantasy because it's a bridge between the magical realm and the real realm. I loved getting to write my own.

—Maggie
Third Grader

TEACHING FANTASY WRITING

For Alyssa Peng,
Fantasy writer extraordinaire—
I am so proud to be your teacher.

TEACHING FANTASY WRITING

LESSONS THAT INSPIRE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND CREATIVITY

Carl Anderson

Foreword by Matt Glover

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CONTENTS

For additional lessons and downloadable resources, visit the companion website at **resources.corwin.com/teachingfantasywriting**.

FOREWORD

Maggie, a student in Emily Callahan's third grade class, is eager to share the latest installment in the series of fantasy books she's writing. Her excitement is palpable as she talks about the story, and she also shares insights about her writing process. Right away she explains that she's written a three-part hybrid story: "It's a magical adventure story, a magic door story, and a magical friendship story." She then says, "I used a mentor. I used *Margaret's Unicorn*. I thought of the unicorn and how she got trapped, and then I thought of a dragon, Spot, and how he could get trapped." Finally Maggie explains, "After I finish this series, I'm going to write a book that's the backstory about how she found Spot."

Maggie's in-depth understanding of her own process as a writer, her well-crafted story, her ability to study authentic texts, and her extremely high level of engagement isn't unique in her classroom. The other students make similar comments. The intellectual rigor in this class is not accidental. Maggie and her friends' thinking and writing were valued and nurtured by thoughtful decisions their teacher, Emily, made during a unit on writing fantasy stories. Maggie and her peers will tell you that fantasy was their favorite unit of the year. Emily will tell you it was her favorite unit as well.

However, if Maggie and her classmates were in many of the world's classrooms, they wouldn't have the opportunity to write fantasy in school, much less study it deeply in a writing unit. Imagine the remarkable thinking and engagement they would miss out on, especially if their year of writing only included essays, personal narratives, writing in response to reading, and informational reports.

All children have the right to become engaged learners. It is because of classes like Maggie's that I'm so excited about this book. I've been waiting expectantly for this book to begin influencing teachers and their students. Carl Anderson and I have known each other for a long time, but over the past few years we have become close friends. We have spent countless hours collaborating on a variety of projects to help teachers become better writing teachers. During long conversations about our beliefs about teaching and learning, I have come to know the depth of Carl's passion for student engagement, as well as his love for reading fantasy. He is the perfect person to write this book, one that every teacher and child deserves.

Much of my work as an author and writing consultant centers on student engagement, and I'm particularly interested in how student engagement in writing increases when children are allowed to choose genres. One of the questions I frequently ask classes of fourth and fifth graders is, "What are your favorite genres to write?" Wherever I am in the world, the most frequent response is, by far, fantasy. It's usually the first genre they name. Many children love to read fantasy, so it's not surprising that so many love to write it.

Time and again, I find fantasy to be one of the most underrepresented units in schools' curriculum maps for writing, especially in fourth and fifth grades. There

is often a mismatch between what students are eager to write and what they are being required to write at school. Yet that doesn't mean that students aren't writing fantasy outside of school. Many children are fulfilling this need to write fantasy by working *around* the curriculum and have secret writing lives at home where they are writing fantasy.

A love for writing fantasy and writing about fantasy topics isn't only found in the upper grades. Walk into a kindergarten class in the first week of school when children are making books and see which genres they're writing in (even if they can't name them). In my lengthy experience in early childhood classrooms, about 60 percent of early books are list books, and many of those list books are telling the reader about superheroes, unicorns, fairies, Pokémon, and other fantasy-related topics. Of the 40 percent of the books that are stories, the vast majority are fantasy. Rarely do I see students who are allowed to choose their genres in the beginning of kindergarten—a crucial choice they should have—choose to write personal narratives. Certainly, kindergarteners write books about their families and animals and all sorts of topics, but writing fantasy stories and writing informational books about fantasy characters is more engaging for them.

Sadly, many schools prioritize the writing of personal narratives, not fantasy. I know of schools that have personal narrative units every year, but there isn't a single fantasy writing unit, even though fantasy so effectively honors student interests and maximizes student engagement. Even more concerning is when I see schools where the only writing students do are responses to reading, writing isolated paragraphs, or writing that has no connection to student interests. It's not that I don't want students to write personal narratives or essays, or in other authentic genres. But I firmly believe that we have to think about the genres children experience across a year and their impact on engagement. If students learn to write, but in the process also learn to dislike writing, what have we gained? And what have we given up? If we care about student engagement—and we absolutely should—I believe we have to consider opportunities for students to write fantasy and other highly engaging genres.

So, why are there so few fantasy writing units? When I ask teachers about including a fantasy unit in their curriculum, there are some common refrains:

- "I know my students would love it, but I don't feel comfortable teaching fantasy."
- "I tried it once and it didn't go well because students wrote long rambling stories, and I didn't know how to support them."
- "My school doesn't have a fantasy unit in their curriculum map," or "My school doesn't have a resource that supports writing fantasy."

I understand these concerns. Fantasy wasn't a genre I felt comfortable teaching when I taught first grade, I don't read a lot of fantasy myself, and I don't write fantasy on my own for fun.

However, it's easy to include a fantasy unit in your year because most standards include narrative writing but don't specify what narrative genres students should learn to write. In fact, most standards refer to students writing stories with "imagined

or real events." Having a fantasy unit allows students to meet the standards, learn to write well, and be highly engaged in the process.

So that leaves the issue of not feeling comfortable, or knowing how, to teach fantasy writing. Fortunately, Carl Anderson and *Teaching Fantasy Writing* provide the perfect solution. Carl's expertise as a teacher, his deep respect for and understanding of children, and his love of writing fantasy make him the perfect person to walk alongside you on your journey to learn how to teach fantasy writing well.

After making the case in the opening chapter for why writing fantasy is crucial for children, Carl provides support in the form of chapters with projected units for different grades. In each unit, Carl helps you learn about fantasy writing by providing you with a wealth of teaching possibilities for whole group teaching, small groups, and in individual writing conferences. Having a large bank of possibilities allows teachers to tailor instruction to meet the needs of their class and individual students.

Because Carl believes in children's ability to engage in meaningful inquiry, he shows you how to study a stack of fantasy mentor texts with students. And because writing is easier (at any age) when the writer has a clear vision for what they are about to write, each unit starts with an immersion phase during which students study an authentic stack of fantasy picture books or short stories. To avoid having students create formulaic writing, Carl shows you how to help students read like writers so they can notice a variety of techniques published authors use and use those techniques in their own writing. This fundamental skill of reading like a writer transfers into every other type of writing students encounter across the year. Carl knows that when students co-construct an understanding of how a genre works, they will understand the genre more deeply. And, when teachers experience an immersion phase in a fantasy unit, they'll know how to include one in each of their other genre studies.

Carl also believes that we have to teach both craft and process. Throughout the book, Carl provides lessons that focus on specific craft techniques that students can use in their writing. And Carl also shows you how to tackle the process of writing fantasy. How do we help students create fantasy worlds? How do we help them organize their stories to keep them focused, given that students often want to write about long, rambling adventures? The answer lies in engaging in fantasy writing ourselves and analyzing the processes we use. Carl models how to write your own fantasy stories. This is important because writing our own stories helps us feel comfortable writing and teaching fantasy. Carl reminds us that we don't need to write them particularly well—that's what we have published authors for. Just like students need to feel comfortable with their approximations, teachers need to feel comfortable as well. Carl helps you find ideas, use meaningful planning strategies, and revise and edit your own writing so you can in turn teach students these important parts of the writing process.

Carl also believes in teachers' ability to think and make responsive decisions regarding which lessons to teach day by day in a unit rather than relying on someone who wrote a unit several years ago or who has never met your students to tell you what your students need to learn tomorrow. The teacher is the person best positioned to make responsive decisions for their class, and teachers will make more informed choices with Carl by their side. In each unit, Carl describes a possible path for how the

unit could unfold. Then he encourages you to make additions and modifications that respond to the needs of your specific class.

Many fantasy stories have a main character with core beliefs and values that guide their actions, even when they encounter adversity. Carl's beliefs and values about children and teaching form the strong foundation of *Teaching Fantasy Writing* and, like a magical sword or sidekick, will help you when stumbling blocks arise. Carl understands both the benefits and challenges of teaching fantasy writing and provides the support you need to help your students become stronger, more engaged writers throughout their writing lives. I can't think of anyone more passionate and skilled to support you on this quest.

—Matt Glover, writing consultant and author
Craft and Process Studies

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing a book is an epic journey. Like the main characters in fantasy stories, I depended on many others to assist me every step of the way.

This book had its beginnings in an online writing course I taught during the pandemic for elementary and middle school students from Shenzhen, China, sponsored by Ming Yang Mastery, an educational organization. My students taught me that young writers find fantasy writing to be deeply engaging and showed me how much this kind of writing ignites their creativity. My heartfelt thanks to all of them.

I am beyond grateful to Alyssa Peng, to whom this book is dedicated, for the two years I spent working with her after the Ming Yang class. It was a joy helping Alyssa expand her short fantasy story, "Grace's Journey," into a beautiful illustrated novel.

Thanks to Colleen Cruz, who, like the key character at a crossroads who points the hero in the right direction, steered me towards Corwin when I was searching for a publishing home for this book.

I am appreciative that early on in this project, Katherine Bomer had a writing conference with me and shared her Yoda-like wisdom on how to write about genre studies.

I am thankful to colleagues Mike Anderson, Kathy Collins, Georgia Heard, Ellin Keene, and Hannah Schneewind for their ongoing support and conversations about teaching.

Like characters on the starship *Enterprise* who take breaks from exploring the galaxy by visiting the ship's holodeck, Dan Feigelson gave me breaks from writing by going to art museums and jazz clubs with me. He is also the one who connected me to Ming Yang Mastery. And Dan gifted me a copy of George Saunders' *A Swim in the Pond in the Rain*. I found Saunders's insights into teaching the short story invaluable as I wrote about teaching short fantasy fiction.

While writing this book, I also co-wrote *How to Become a Better Writing Teacher* with Matt Glover. My conversations with Matt about student engagement, projecting writing units of study, teaching writing with mentor texts, and much more had an indispensable—you might even say magical—impact on this book. And Matt's unbounded excitement about the project energized me from the start to the finish.

Ryan Scala was the first teacher to volunteer to pilot lessons described in the book. I've so enjoyed our monthly Zoom conversations and my visits to his fifth-grade classroom on Long Island.

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I also was fortunate to do residencies at PS 38 in Brooklyn. Thanks so much to Principal Pascale Pradel and Assistant Principal Jackie Smith for their warm welcome and enthusiasm for this project, and to teachers Maria Berrios, Rebecca Chisefsky, Graham Nugent, Taylor Plaza, Mirlanda Ramadani, Margarita Ruiz, Amber Viani, Barbara Wlazlo, and Helen Wong, who hosted me in their classrooms.

Several teachers from across the United States invited me to do online residencies. Thanks so much to Emily Callahan, Kristin Fitch, Bryanna Novak-Rich, Rebecca O'Dell, and Tim Saunders for the time we spent talking about teaching fantasy on Zoom, and for the opportunities they gave me to work with their students online. And thanks to Melanie Meehan for connecting me to Kristin and Bryanna.

The team at Corwin is comprised of wizards. With one glance at her crystal ball, my editor, Tori Bachman, saw this book's potential. Like Gandalf, she gave me wise counsel from beginning to end. Every author should be so lucky to get to work with Sharon Wu, who handled so many of the nitty-gritty details of the project. Zack Vann did painstaking work to help get the manuscript into its final shape. Once the book was submitted, Amy Schroller steered the book through the production process, Shannon Kelly copy edited the manuscript with care and thoughtfulness, and Gail Buschman designed its beautiful cover. And thanks to Margaret O'Connor in marketing for getting word of the book out to teachers everywhere.

Finally, I'm so grateful for my family. Early in their childhoods, my children, Anzia and Haskell, discovered a love for reading and watching fantasy, from *Harry Potter* to the movies of Studio Ghibli's Hiyao Miyazaki. I am so glad to have this in common with them! Special gratitude to Anzia for drawing the cover illustration, as well as the illustrations that begin each of the book's chapters and are sprinkled throughout the text.

My wife Robin and I have known each other since 1980, and we've had an epic journey together. We've spent many happy hours reading and talking about fantasy books and watching fantasy television shows and movies, too many at this point to count. I am beyond-the-moon grateful for this time together, and all the rest.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Carl Anderson is an internationally recognized expert in writing instruction for grades K–8. A regular presenter at national and international conferences, he works as a consultant in schools and districts around the world. Carl is the best-selling author of *How to Become a Better Writing Teacher* (with Matt Glover), *A Teacher's Guide to Mentor Texts K–5, A Teacher's Guide to Writing Conferences K–8, How's It Going: A Practical Guide to Conferring With Student Writers,* and other titles. Carl began his career in education as an elementary and middle school teacher.

INTRODUCTION

Imagination is more important than knowledge.

—Albert Einstein (1929)

[I]magination, in our schools, is still treated like a poor relative in comparison with attention *and* memory.

—Gianni Rodari (1973)

Creativity is as important as literacy and we should afford it the same status.

—Ken Robinson (2006)

I've spent many hours of my life in imaginary lands. I didn't travel there through rabbit holes or wardrobes. Instead, the pages of fantasy books have taken me to magical places.

When I was a child, J. R. R. Tolkien's words were my portal to Middle Earth in *The Hobbit* (1938) and *The Lord of the Rings* (1954, 1955, 1956). Norton Juster's writing took me to the Lands Beyond in *The Phantom Tollbooth* (1961). As an adult, authors such as S. K. Chakraborty, N. K. Jemisin, Robert Jordan, Ursula LeGuin, Phillip Pullman, Brandon Sanderson, and many others have invited me into the fantastical worlds they've created.

Why do I love reading fantasy? I think it's because fantasy stories have had deep personal meaning for me. For example, I returned to the Lands Beyond so many times as a child because I identified with its quiet, sad main character, Milo, who goes on a quest to rescue the Princesses Rhyme and Reason so they can heal the Kingdom of Wisdom and, in the process, becomes a happier, more engaged person. As someone whose family lacked both rhyme and reason, reading about Milo and his quest helped me begin to imagine that even though my family of origin wouldn't ever have those qualities, that didn't need to be true of my entire life.

I've also spent many hours of my life in the real world of classrooms during the last thirty-five years, first as a teacher and then as a visiting staff developer. It didn't take me long to realize how much children today share my love of reading fantasy, and I've happily recommended many great books to them.

But in most classrooms—including my own as a teacher and those in schools I've visited around the world since—I've rarely seen children write fantasy.

For most of my career, I didn't give this much thought. After all, this seemed like the normal state of affairs, as I didn't get opportunities to write fantasy in my own

schooling and didn't write a fantasy story myself until I was in my thirties. (It was a script for *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* that I co-wrote with my wife, Robin. We tried to sell it to Paramount Television, alas unsuccessfully.) Also, almost all of the professional development I had as a writing teacher and the professional books I read prioritized the teaching of true stories—personal narrative—not imaginary ones.

I realize now that I was like Dorothy, who lived in a Kansas that was, as Frank Baum (1900) describes it, "colourless and grey." And, just like it took a tornado for Dorothy to get to the Land of Oz, which Baum describes with a full palette of colors, it took a world-historical tempest—the COVID pandemic—for me to fully realize the value of teaching fantasy writing to children and the necessity that teachers add this brilliant, colorful, and above all else, *meaningful* genre to their curricular repertoires.

During the pandemic, I taught an online writing class to children in upper elementary and middle school grades who attended international schools in Shenzhen, China. For the first part of the course, we studied personal narrative and nonfiction writing. My students were reasonably engaged and dutifully wrote true stories and feature articles. For me, and for my students, it was business as usual in writing workshop.

Then I decided to try something different: I launched a study of fantasy writing. Very quickly things changed, *dramatically*. First, student engagement went sky high. And as I read through my student's writing—the world-building work they did in their writer's notebooks and the stories that grew out of this work—I was struck by a level of creativity that I had rarely seen in student writing throughout my career.

This book has its beginnings in that online course. Since then I've continued to study the teaching of fantasy writing in grades K–6. I've found homes in local Brooklyn schools, where I've done fantasy residencies. I've done online collaborations with teachers across the United States. And I've also continued to teach my own students in online courses.

I've seen dramatic increases in student engagement in all of this work. Teacher after teacher has said that the study was their students' favorite of the year. Emily Callahan, a third-grade teacher from Missouri, describes the fantasy writing unit we collaborated on as her *all-time-favorite* unit of study to teach.

Teaching fantasy has unlocked student creativity in stunning and remarkable ways. It has also helped students improve their skills as writers. You'll see plenty of examples of this in the book as we examine stories from students in kindergarten through sixth grade.

Here's what you'll find in this book:

- In **Chapter One,** I set the stage by making an argument for teaching fantasy writing, as well as discussing what gets in the way of teaching fantasy.
- In **Chapter Two,** I'll give you an overview of a writing unit of study, naming and describing each of the important teaching moves you'll make when you teach a fantasy writing unit of study.
- **Chapter Three** provides a unit of study for students in grades K–1 called Introduction to Fantasy. This unit is also appropriate for students in second grade who don't have a lot of writing experience.

- **Chapter Four** details a unit of study for students in grades 2–3 called Magical Relationships. The unit is also appropriate for students in fourth grade who don't have much writing experience.
- **Chapter Five** offers a unit of study for students in grades 4–6 I call Magical Worlds. With a few adjustments (that I discuss in Appendix A), this unit could be done with students in grades 7 and 8, too.
- In the **Appendixes**, you'll find answers to frequently asked questions, a discussion of how to assess fantasy writing, and a guide to revising the units in this book.
- And in the **Online Resources**, you'll find additional lessons, student writing samples, teaching tools, and assessment forms.

I've written this book in the hope that it will help you feel comfortable—and excited—to teach fantasy and to equip you with the tools you'll need to travel in the Lands Beyond the usual units of study that are in your writing curriculum. And, most important, I hope the book will make it possible for your students to have the experience of writing fantasy in school and that it helps them unlock their creativity, exercise their imaginations, develop their writing skills, and bring brilliance, color, and meaning to the writing they do.

CHAPTER ONE

WHY FANTASY?

Art by Anzia Anderson

There should be magic in student writing.

Children should be writing stories with magical characters in them. Witches and wizards. Elves and merfolk.

Children should be writing about magical creatures. Unicorns and fairies. Trolls and ogres. And, of course, dragons.

Children should be writing about characters with magical powers who can cast spells, become invisible, shape-shift, and fly.

And children should be writing about fantastical settings. Magic-filled forests and deserts, castles and wizard schools. Wondrous worlds that characters travel to via magic portals.

However, children don't often get to write fantasy in school.

You may be thinking, *That's really too bad*. You realize students enjoy writing fantasy, but your curriculum is already filled to the brim with studies of personal narrative, nonfiction, opinion, poetry, realistic fiction, and more—all in the service of helping students meet ever-more-demanding standards. Isn't that enough?

Good question. The way you're feeling is the same way characters often feel at the beginning of fantasy stories. Busy leading their day-to-day lives, the idea of breaking their routines and going on a quest is the furthest thing from their minds. Characters like Frodo Baggins and his fellow hobbits who, at the start of *The Lord of the Rings* (Tolkien, 1954, 1955, 1956), are living in the Shire, a "pleasant corner of the world [where] they plied their well-ordered business of living" (Tolkien, 1954, p. 14), reveling in good food, good music, and good friends.

In these stories, the greater world beyond the characters' home is troubled, its magical balance under threat. Yet the characters are often cut off from that larger world or ignore it, like the hobbits, who "heeded less and less of the world outside" (Tolkien, 1954, p. 14) until a precipitating event forces them to leave their comfortable home and go on an adventure. After Frodo is gifted a ring by his uncle Bilbo, who came into its possession during the adventures detailed in *The Hobbit* (Tolkien, 1938), he learns it's the legendary Ring of Power that cannot, at any cost, fall into the hands of Sauron, the necromancer who is seeking it, for Sauron would use it to spread darkness everywhere. Frodo must leave the Shire and ultimately travel to Mordor to destroy the ring and restore balance to the world.

Like Middle Earth, the teaching of writing is unbalanced today. Fantasy, a genre that gives student writers a key that will help them unlock and use the full range of their imaginations and creativity, is rarely represented in writing curriculums. And even when there *are* writing units about fantasy genres, they're usually placed at the end of the school year and are something that students get a chance to experience only if there are still a few weeks left before school closes for the summer.

My hope is that this book is the precipitating event that nudges you, like Frodo, to go on an important quest—in this case, to bring fantasy writing into your writing curriculum and bring balance to the kinds of writing your students do across the school year. As you go on this quest, I'll be your trusty companion who will help you along the way, much like Samwise Gamgee is at Frodo's side throughout *The Lord of the Rings*.

In this chapter, I'll help you take the first two steps of your quest:

1. You'll learn why it's essential that children write fantasy stories.
2. You'll come to understand what has been standing in the way of including fantasy writing in writing curriculums.

WHY IS FANTASY WRITING SO IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN?

You may not need convincing to include fantasy writing in your curriculum. You may love reading the genre, and you may even write fantasy yourself, perhaps posting your writing on one of the many fan fiction sites on the Internet. Yet something is holding you back. Perhaps you don't know how to plan a study of fantasy writing, or you haven't been able to convince your colleagues that teaching fantasy writing should be valued as much as teaching other narrative genres.

Or you may need some arm-twisting to even consider inviting your students to write fantasy. Maybe your taste in reading doesn't include fantasy, and the last time you wrote a fantasy story yourself was in elementary school, maybe on Halloween when you were given fifteen minutes to respond to the silly prompt, "A witch flies into the cafeteria. Suddenly. . . ." Perhaps you are genuinely unsure why your students should study fantasy writing.

Whatever your stance toward fantasy and having your students write it, there are several excellent reasons for including it in your writing curriculum. If you already love the idea of teaching fantasy, these reasons can motivate you even more and help you make a case to your colleagues. And if you're skeptical about teaching fantasy writing, they'll help you understand why you should make it a priority.

Why fantasy writing should be a priority in classrooms:

- *Fantasy writing helps students develop their creativity and imagination.*
- *Fantasy is a highly engaging genre.*
- *Fantasy writing gives kids tools for expression that other genres do not.*
- *Fantasy writing helps students with social-emotional learning.*
- *Fantasy writing helps students meet writing standards.*

Fantasy Writing Helps Students Develop Their Creativity and Imagination

In the United States, children in grades K–12 are experiencing a decades-long "creativity crisis." Since 1990, they have become measurably less creative (Bronson & Merryman, 2010). As noted by educational scholar and creativity researcher Kyung Hee Kim (2016), scores on the most reliable measure of children's creativity—the Torrance test—indicate that 85 percent of children today are less creative than children in the 1980s.

That students are less creative has profound implications for their lives and for the world. More and more, the successful futures we want for children depend on their having imaginative and creative skills. In *The Global Achievement Gap* (Wagner, 2008), *Creating Innovators: The Making of Young People Who Will Change the World* (Wagner, 2012), and *Most Likely to Succeed: Preparing Our Kids for the Innovation Era* (Wagner & Dintersmith, 2016), education expert Tony Wagner names and describes seven 21st-century survival skills that students need to be successful in today's innovation economy and to be the kinds of social disruptors who can tackle today's problems. One of these skills is curiosity and imagination, which Wagner says students develop when their childhoods are filled with creative play.

What accounts for the creativity crisis? Since the 1990s, school curricula have become more and more standardized, a change driven to a large degree by the pressures caused by testing. And as curricula have become more standardized, there is less and less time for play-centered activities in schools. This is a problem because play is "one of the driving engines of child development" and "encourages flexible, imaginative, out-of-the-box thinking" (Strauss, 2019).

How should schools respond to the creativity crisis? They need to engage children in activities that give them the opportunity to exercise their creativity and imagination—such as writing fantasy.

WHEN CHILDREN WRITE FANTASY, THEY CREATE PARACOSMS

When they write fantasy, students create what psychologists call paracosms, or detailed imaginary worlds. The term used when someone creates a paracosm is world-*play* (emphasis added).

If you've read *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson (1977), you know that the character Leslie Burke creates the imaginary kingdom of Terabithia, which she and her friend Jesse Aarons enter by using a rope swing to cross a creek behind Leslie's house. In Terebithia, Leslie and Jesse pretend they are the king and queen of the kingdom. The world of Terabithia is Leslie's paracosm, which she shares with Jesse.

Psychologists have discovered that nearly one in five children create paracosms on their own, usually in middle childhood (Taylor et al., 2018). This worldplay is a kind of creativity that evolves from imaginative play and that usually begins at age two in children: playing with dolls or figurines, having an imaginary friend (true for two-thirds of preschoolers), and groups of children on playgrounds acting out imagined narratives (Gopnik, 2018; Janes, 2019). Those children who don't create their own paracosms are often drawn to those created by others. As Alison Gopnik (2018) writes in *The Wall Street Journal*, "Even when 10-year-olds don't create paracosms, they seem to have a special affinity for them—think of all the young 'Harry Potter fanatics.'" Think, too, of how many children love to immerse themselves in paracosms in movies such as those from the Marvel Cinematic Universe and Studio Ghibli, as well as those they can be part of in video games such as Minecraft.

WORLDPLAY INVOKES HIGH-LEVEL CREATIVE THINKING

Research has shown links between childhood worldplay and adult artistic achievement, as well as creative success in the sciences and social sciences. For example, many notable creative people created paracosms as children. These include Charlotte and Emily Brontë, who would later write *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*;

C. S. Lewis, the author of *The Chronicles of Narnia*; Friedrich Nietzsche; Amadeus Mozart; and numerous others. And a study of one group of creative people, the MacArthur fellows, all winners of the award colloquially known as the genius grant, showed that 25 percent of them had paracosms as children and that their worldplay often continued into adulthood as part of their creative processes (Gopnik, 2018; Root-Bernstein, 2009).

When writing fantasy is included in a writing curriculum, the experience of engaging in worldplay and creating paracosms is one that *every* child in the classroom gets to have. Each child then has the opportunity to develop their creativity and imagination in the same way as children who do this on their own, outside of school.

For example, as part of learning how to write fantasy, Alyssa, a fifth grader, created the intricate imaginary world of Budgielyn (see Figure 1-1). Alyssa populated Budgielyn with all sorts of "budgie creatures," such as budgie fairies and budgiecorns, as well as a variety of evil budgie creatures.

FIGURE 1-1 • ALYSSA'S MAP OF BUDGIELYN

WORLDPLAY INVITES "WHAT IF?" THINKING

When children create imaginary worlds, they engage in "what if?" thinking. In his book *The Grammar of Fantasy*, educator Gianni Rodari (1973) calls this technique the "fantastical hypothesis." When children then answer these "what if?" questions by using what they've learned about fantasy to write their own stories set in the worlds they've created, they draw upon their creativity and imagination.

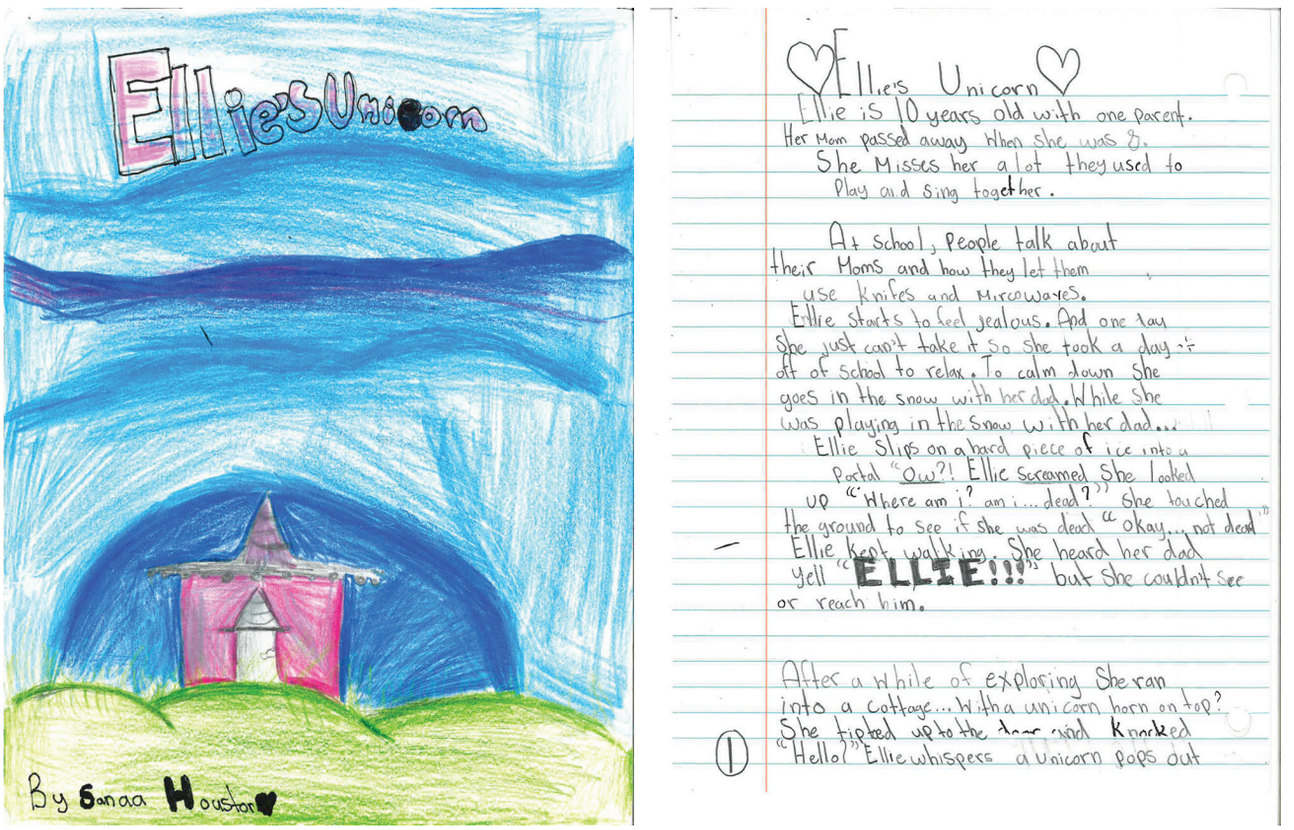
In his book *Imagination and Creativity in Childhood*, Lev Vygotsky (2004) points out the creative connection between children's play and story writing:

> A child's play is not simply a reproduction of what [they have] experienced, but a creative reworking of the impressions [they have] acquired. [They combine] them and [use] them to construct a new reality, one that conforms to [their] own needs and desires. Children's desire to draw and make up stories are other examples of exactly this same type of imagination and play. (pp. 11–12)

In the story "Ellie's Unicorn," written by Sanaa, a third grader, she asks this "what if?" question: What would happen if humans could meet a unicorn who can summon loved ones they've lost for twenty-four days? (See Figure 1-2.)

To answer this question, Sanaa takes things she's learned about fantasy stories—that their main characters have needs and face challenges, that they can include magic portals, and that magical creatures can grant wishes but also impose conditions on them—to create her own unique story that helps her explore a question of great personal significance for her: How does one deal with the death of a loved one? The answer she comes up with is that you can *imagine* having conversations with that loved one, conversations that can help you say goodbye and come to terms with your loss. That these conversations have a time limit of twenty-four days speaks to the need for eventually moving on with your life and to a promise that this will be possible.

FIGURE 1-2 • SANAA'S STORY



"HELLO!" the unicorn shrieks "oh,hi!"
"Woah a... hoo man... COme in!" "uhh ok?"
Ellie walk in and sits on the couch
"My name is Luna" "Mine is Ellie
Ellie Smiled "Mom loved unicorns"
"Wanna play i confess?" Luna asks
"Sure, i go first, do you have powers?"
"yup, i can bring people who passed
alive for 24 days" "really?" Ellie
started crying Ellie told Luna about
her Mom and how She passed away
Luna thinks "We just met should
i really do it?" Ellie was confused
"aren't you gonna summon her?"
"Maybe later, but lets play now!"
Ellie Stood there speachless "Later?!"
"Later thats it" Ellie Scolded Luna
LATER REALLY! ARE YOU SERIOUS!!
I THOUGHT YOU WOULD HELP ME!!
Ellie storms off and slams the door.
Ellie thinks "What a traitor i thought
She would help me!" Luna starts
to feel bad and wants to help Ellie
Luna opens the door
"COMEBACK!!!
Ellie rolls her eyes "Fine"

2

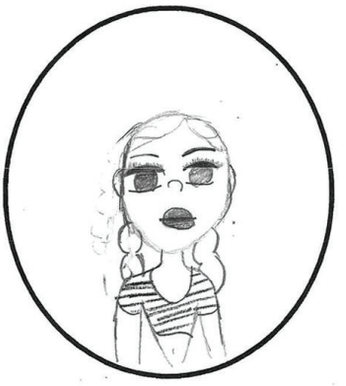
Ahhhh Ohh hE hhhh Uhh hI hhh
BOOM!!! Ellie's Mom was
back! the Second Ellie's Mom was
"back, they hugged, very tight
"I Miss you" Ellie Mumbled in her
Moms chest "I Missed you too" her Mom
said "thanks Luna for bringing her
back" "your welcome!"
"remember She's only here for
24 days" "alright" Ellie and
her mom walk out the house
they Jump in the portal and dad is
waiting they all reunite and hug. dad
even starts to cry because he is
So happy. Ellie starts to feel so Much
Joy that she crys too. they Stop
hugging untill Luna walks up to them
up to them "I forgot you guys can't
get home" Luna Magicly Makes a
car and hands the keys to dad and
they drive off. While in the
car Ellie looks back and feels
happy because...

3

...She knows when to say goodbye

4

About the Author



I am 8 years old. I wrote this fantasy story for My cousin Because she lost her Mom. I will always love you
Zoe-Sanaa Houston

Fantasy Is a Highly Engaging Genre

It's not a secret. If you give students the opportunity to choose their own genre, many of them will write fantasy stories.

Why is this?

- Many children enjoy reading fantasy, as well as watching it on television and in the movies, and want to write it themselves.
- Since play is such an important way that children learn and experience the world, they're excited by types of writing that feel playful.
- Writing fantasy gives students a safe space—and the tools they need—to explore ideas and themes that are important to them.
- Since children are incredibly imaginative, they are naturally drawn to writing fantasy.
- Writing fantasy is fun!

Because students are so engaged when they write fantasy, it's more likely they will learn these writing and creativity skills and reapply them in the future (Keene, 2018):

- Students learn about the qualities of good writing: focus, structure, detail, voice, and conventions.
- Students learn strategies for navigating each stage of the writing process, such as how to choose topics wisely, plan a piece of writing, revise and edit, and more.
- As they engage in worldplay, students exercise and develop their creativity skills.

Writing fantasy today is engaging for all children because there are more fantasy books being published that center on characters from historically marginalized groups. This was not true of fantasy in the past. Diverse characters either weren't present, were portrayed as sacrificing themselves for the main white character, or were included so a white character could be their savior.

Educator Rudine Sims Bishop (1990) writes about the importance of texts being "mirrors" for children in which they can see themselves reflected. When children read fantasy stories in which they encounter characters who share similar backgrounds and interests with them, they are much more likely to be interested in writing these kinds of stories themselves.

Resource Box

Here are several examples of recent fantasy stories that center on characters from historically marginalized groups:

- Picture books such as
  - Kelly DiPucchio's (2021) *Oona*,
  - Josh Funk's (2016) *Dear Dragon*, and
  - Lupita Nyong'o's (2019) *Sulwe*.
- Middle-grade novels such as
  - Zeta Elliott's (2018) *Dragons in a Bag*,
  - Tomi Adeyemi's (2018) *The Children of Blood and Bone* series,
  - B. B. Alston's (2021) *Amari and the Night Brothers*,
  - Grace Lin's (2009) *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*, and
  - Erin Entrada Kelly's (2019) *Lelani of the Distant Sea*.

Fantasy Gives Kids Tools That Other Genres Do Not

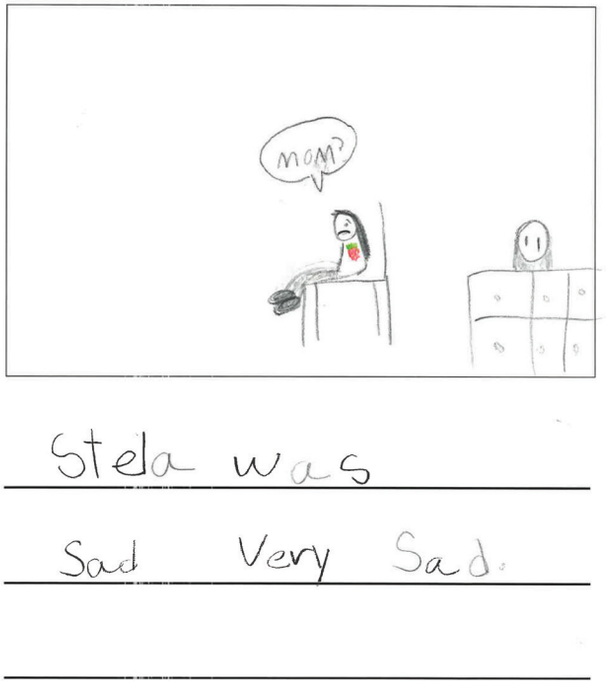
Fantasy author Brandon Sanderson describes fantasy as "the biggest genre of all," meaning that it isn't bound by the conventions of other narrative genres, such as personal narrative (Sanderson et al., 2022). Freed from these conventions, fantasy offers children a set of exciting and versatile tools for expressing themselves.

FANTASY GIVES CHILDREN NEW WAYS TO EXPLORE IMPORTANT THEMES

Fantasy gives students different tools for exploring themes than the ones used in personal narrative or memoir.

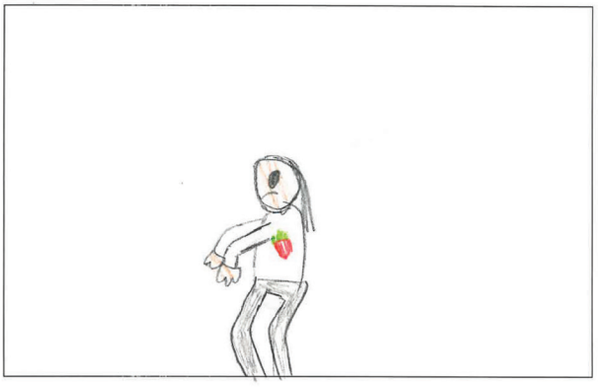
For example, in "Journey," Lana, a kindergartener, explores the theme of loneliness by creating the character of Stella, who at the beginning of her story has no one to play with (see Figure 1-3). By using the fantasy convention of the magic doorway, Lana sends Stella to a magical land where she befriends a rabbit and isn't lonely anymore.

FIGURE 1-3 • LANA'S STORY

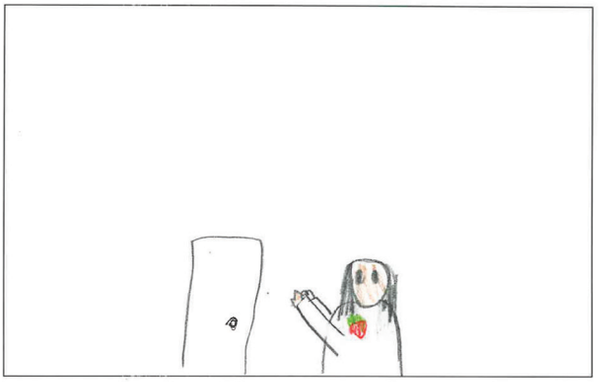


Stella was sad very sad.

Nobody wanted to play with her!

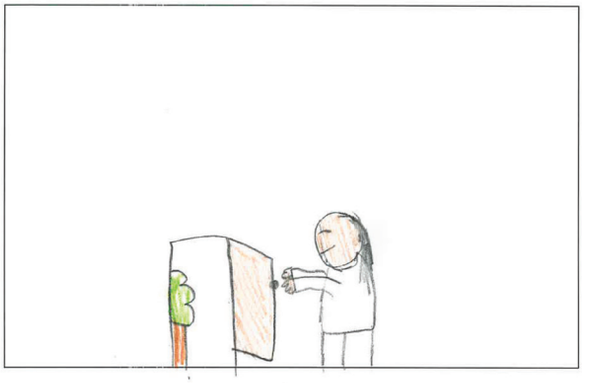


So one night Stella crept down the hall.



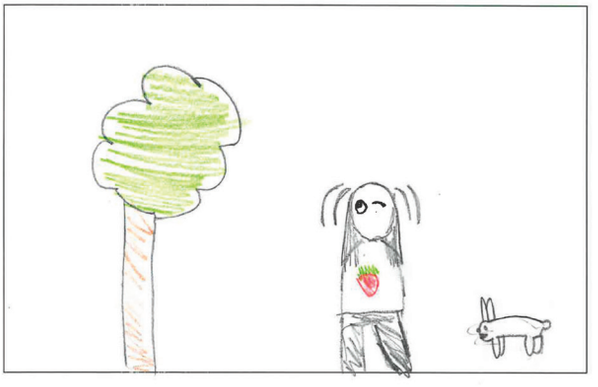
She found a magic dor!!

She found a magic door.



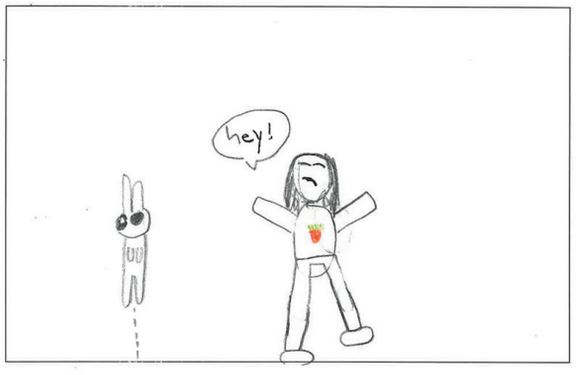
She puld and puld the dor...

She pulled and pulled the door . . .



She Tuk a double-take!

She took a double-take!

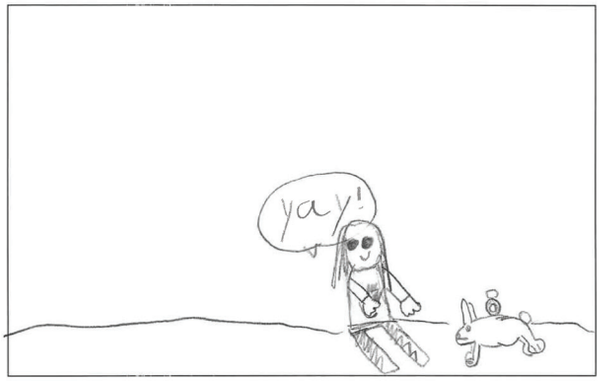


Stela did not like the Buny folowing her.

Stella <u>did not</u> like the bunny following her.

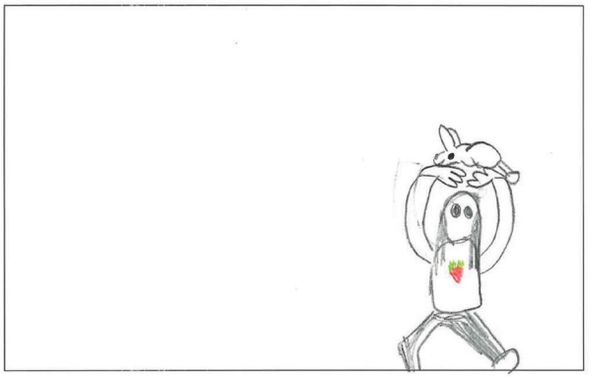
(Continued)

(Continued)



and naw they wer-
friend's

And now they were friends



they playd games
al- day.
ho-my-gosh

They played games all day. Oh-my-gosh.

Writing fantasy gives children a way to create some distance from a sensitive topic or theme and makes it safer for them to write about it. A child may not want to write a true story that others will read about a difficult experience in their lives, even if they were successful in dealing with it and learned valuable lessons from doing so. Writing fantasy gives them another way to explore challenging topics and themes without having to write about them directly.

FANTASY GIVES CHILDREN THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE WONDROUS SETTINGS

Because fantasy gives children the opportunity to create their own imagined worlds, they can venture further afield in their stories than their backyard, the street they live on, or a nearby park. They become more akin to travel writers who take us to amazing places we aren't able to visit ourselves. And because children use their imagination to create these places, their fantasy writing fills us as readers with a sense of awe not just for the magical lands they create but also with the imaginations that created them.

In his story "The Levels," William, a first grader, sends his character Sam on a quest (see Figure 1-4). While on the quest, Sam overcomes several challenging obstacles by remembering to think first. Freed from writing about the world he actually lives in, William creates several fantastical settings in his illustrations. His depiction of the levels is especially complex and intricate, making it a setting worthy of the challenge of thinking first to navigate the levels successfully.

Fantasy Writing Helps Students With Social-Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning (SEL) has been an important element of students' education for some time. Studies have shown that students who participate in SEL programs have better attitudes towards themselves and others, better classroom behavior, and increased academic performance (CASEL, 2022).

When students write fantasy, they gain skill with one of SEL's most important goals: developing empathy for others. How? When students write fantasy stories, they create characters different than themselves. These characters may be human—or other kind of beings or creatures—and they live in different circumstances than the student who creates them. To write their stories, students have to "get inside" their characters and figure out how they experience the world, how they feel about it, and what makes them tick. This work is, by definition, practice with empathy—the ability to understand and share the feelings of another, to walk in another's shoes.

Author Ada Palmer (2021) writes about how fantasy expands what she calls our "empathy sphere":

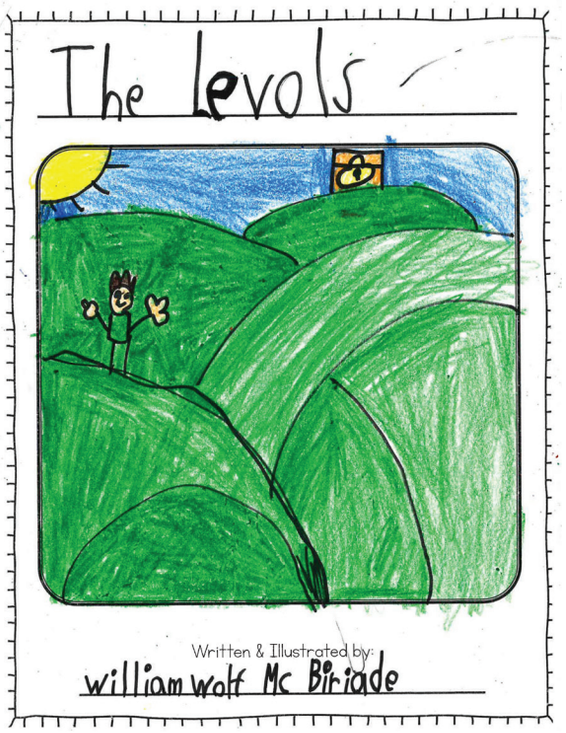
> By this I mean the range of beings that we consider coequally a person with ourselves, deserving of the same rights, dignities, and protections. We are all familiar with the legal expansion of rights over time, the right to vote, the right to own property, the right to marry; this is a parallel expansion of attitudes, what beings fall inside or outside our sphere of empathy, a change most visible in, and often advanced by, literature, especially science fiction and fantasy.

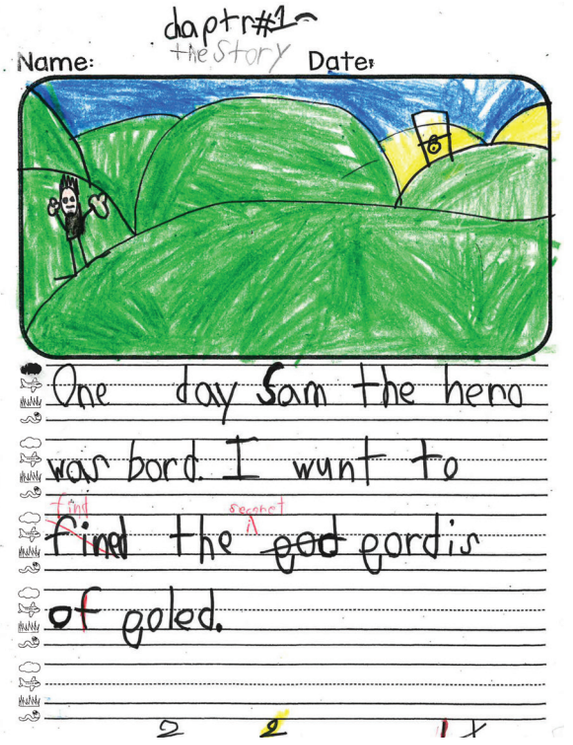
And Brandon Sanderson (2023b) says that fantasy is about "dreaming and imagination and making you—for a short time—be someone else and experience their world." He believes fantasy can have profoundly important effects on readers' understanding of social constructs—and how we can push against them. According to him, "Fantasy preaches against racism, prejudice, hatred, and selfishness. Not overtly, by trying to pound in a message. We do this through the simple method of making our readers live lives as people far different from themselves" (Sanderson, 2023b).

Of course, the first reader of any fantasy story is the writer who creates it. When students are given the opportunity to write fantasy, they can develop important social and emotional skills that will help them understand and get along with the very real people in their immediate worlds and those beyond, skills that psychologist Howard Gardner (2006) refers to as "interpersonal intelligence."

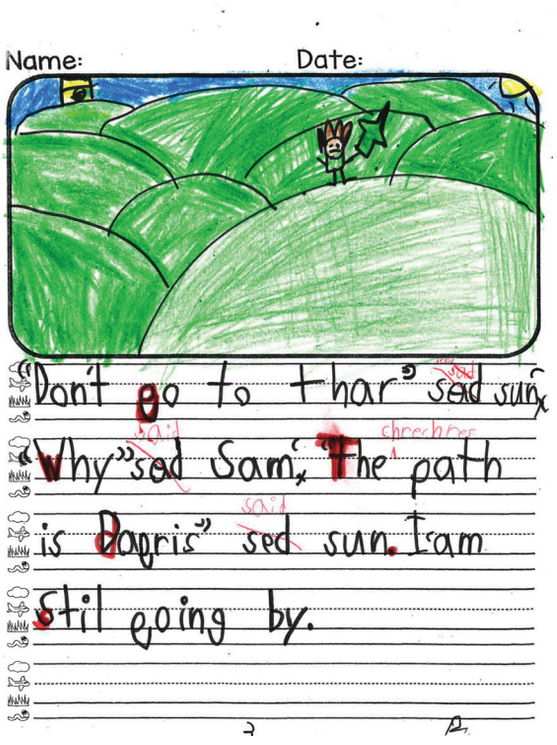
Students can also gain understanding and empathy for themselves and their own feelings when they write stories about characters who share similar emotions, skills that Gardner names as "intrapersonal intelligence."

FIGURE 1-4 • WILLIAM'S STORY

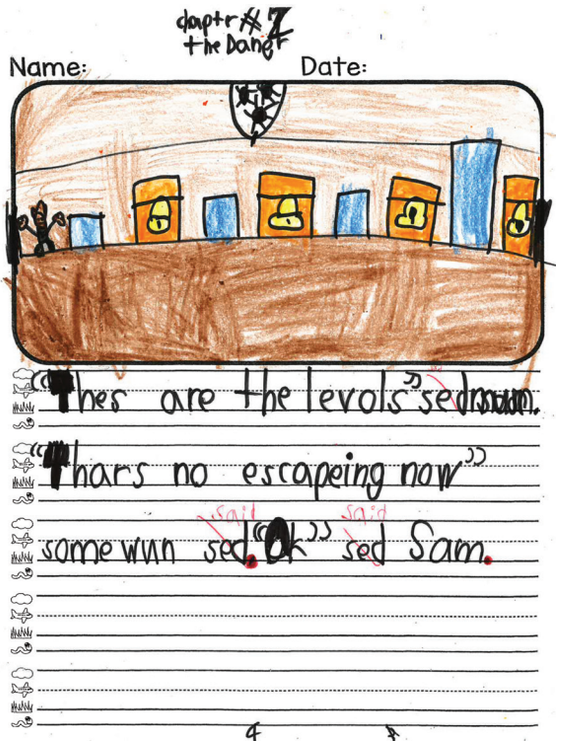




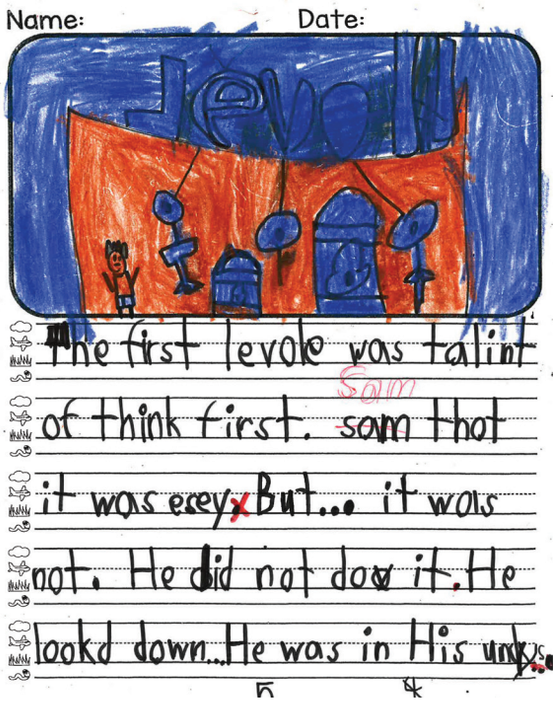
One day Sam the hero was bored. I want to find the secret gardens of gold.



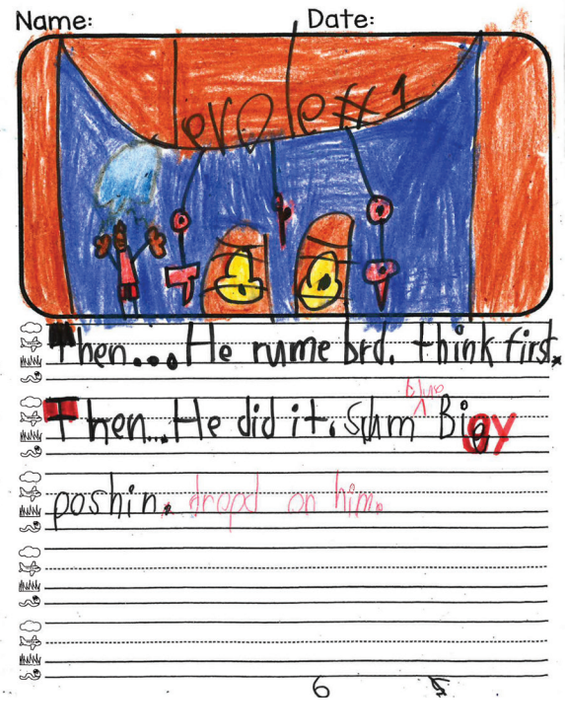
"Don't go to there," said sun.
"Why," said Sam.
"The creature's path is dangerous," said sun.
"I am still going bye."



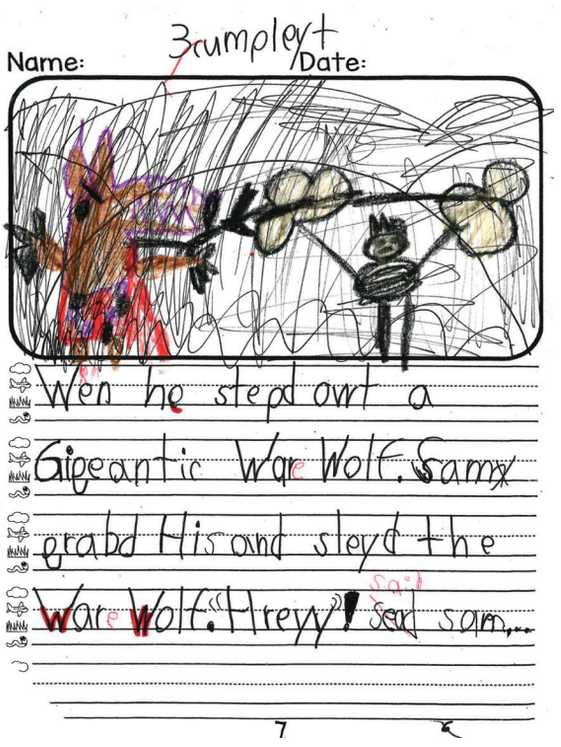
"These are the levels," said sun.
"There's no escaping now," someone said.
"Ok," said Sam.



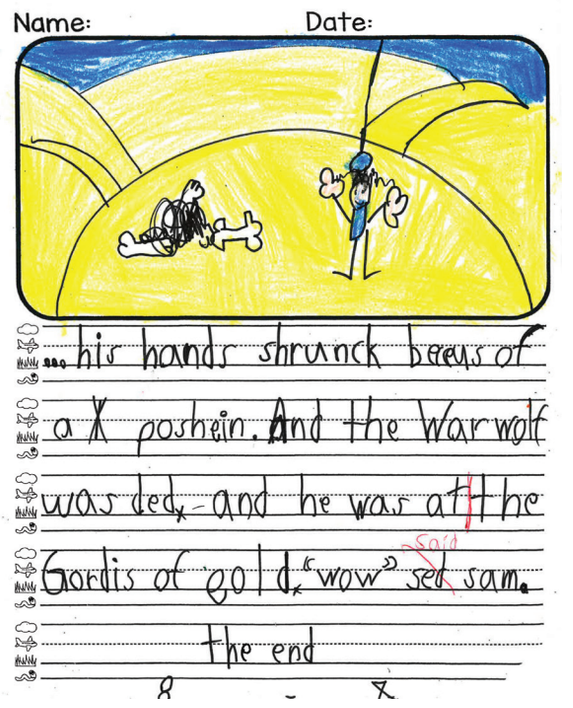
The first level was [the] talent of think first. Sam thought it was easy. But . . . it was not. He did not do it. He looked down. He was in his undies.



Then . . . he remembered. Think first. Then . . . he did it. Some blue big potion dropped on him.



When he stepped out [there was a] Gigantic Werewolf. Sam grabbed his [sword] and slayed the werewolf. "Hurray!" said Sam . . .



. . . his hand shrunk because of a potion. And the werewolf was dead–and he was at the gardens of gold. "Wow" said Sam. The end.

Fantasy Writing Helps Students Meet Writing Standards

You live in the "real world" (no pun intended), a world in which your job is to help your students meet standards in every subject you teach. Can teaching fantasy writing help you do this?

Of course it can. If there's a set of state standards in the United States (or in another country) that doesn't say students should learn how to write narratives, I haven't seen it. You can meet the narrative standards by studying *any* genre of narrative—including fantasy.

Consider New York State's Next Generation ELA Standards and the narrative writing standards they contain for several grades (New York State Education Department et al., 2017). For first graders, the narrative writing standard (1W3) includes "writing narratives which recount real or imagined experiences or events or a short sequence of events."

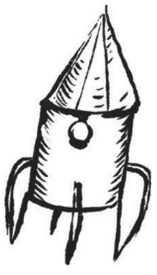
First, kudos to New York State for including *imagined* narratives in their standards! By definition, fantasy writing can help students meet the writing standards for first grade.

Then, notice that what first graders are expected to learn is to "recount" an event or a "short sequence of events." At the very minimum, students can—and will—learn to do this when they write fantasy stories, as evidenced by Lana's and William's stories earlier in this chapter

But what about the upper grades, where the writing standards are more complex? The New York State narrative writing standard for grade 6 (6W3) is to "write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, descriptive details and sequencing."

Once again, notice that the New York State explicitly states that writing about *imagined* experiences is one way to meet the narrative standard.

And while the sixth-grade standards are more complex than the first-grade ones—for example, the effective techniques the standard refers to include introducing a narrator and/or characters, dialogue and description, and transitional words—these techniques are just as easily taught in fantasy writing as they are in personal narrative and memoir.



WHAT IS GETTING IN THE WAY OF TEACHING FANTASY WRITING?

So you've become convinced—or are even more convinced—that it's a good idea to include fantasy writing in your curriculum. However, just as the protagonists of fantasy stories must confront obstacles that stand in the way of them fulfilling their quests, you may need to address the following challenges before you can begin teaching your students to write fantasy:

- bias against fantasy writing
- fear that students won't write fantasy well
- time or curricular constraints

Overcoming Bias Against Fantasy Writing

One obstacle you may face is the longstanding bias against fantasy writing from academics and critics in the literary world (Sanderson, 2023b)—and from your fellow educators.

This bias goes back at least five hundred years. William Shakespeare's contemporaries criticized him for including fantasy elements in many of his plays, such as the witches in *Macbeth*, ghosts in *Hamlet* and *Richard III*, a magician (Prospero) in *The Tempest*, the fairies in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Puck, Oberon, Titiana, et al.), and more. Critics at the time considered Shakespeare's fantastical imagination to be a flaw, a reflection of his parochial rural roots. And critical response since has often downplayed the fantastical elements in Shakespeare's plays, giving much more attention to the "more serious" aspects of character, theme, and social commentary (Hartley, 2018).

Today, this anti-fantasy bias affects the teaching of writing at all levels of education (Sanderson, 2023b). Developers of writing curricula for elementary and middle schools prioritize the writing of true stories because they feel that these kinds of stories are more personally meaningful to students. According to literacy educator Tom Newkirk (2021), "Even in those schools that employ writing workshop approaches, fiction writing is marginalized or avoided, with memoir or personal narrative and, later on, the informational report or argument holding center stage. Often this personal nonfiction is perceived as more authentic than fiction—especially high fantasy, which is seen as derivative" (pp. 2–3).

For these reasons, for much of my professional life I prioritized the teaching of personal narrative and memoir above other narrative genres. Obviously, I've changed my mind! Don't get me wrong, I still think it's important to teach students to write about their lives. Writing personal narrative and memoir not only teaches students important narrative writing skills but is also important for their psychological and emotional growth. Units on these genres *should* be included in writing curriculums.

However, I now believe children should *also* be given the opportunity to write in fantasy genres and that fantasy should be held in the *same* regard as writing true stories, for all of the reasons discussed in the previous sections of this chapter.

I now believe children should also *be given the opportunity to write in fantasy genres and that fantasy should be held in the* same *regard as writing true stories.*

This is in part because I've learned how personally meaningful writing fantasy has been for many authors. For example, Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is rooted in his experiences as a signal officer in World War I, where he fought and saw friends die in the "meat grinder" of the Battle of the Somme in France. As professor Michael Livingston (2022) wrote, "[The main character of] Frodo is almost certainly suffering

from post-traumatic stress disorder, more commonly termed 'shell shock,' a condition first diagnosed among the hollowed faces of the men at the Battle of the Somme" (p. 54). *The Wheel of Time* series (Jordan & Sanderson, 1990–2013) was likewise influenced by Robert Jordan's traumatic experiences as a helicopter door gunner in the Vietnam War (Livingston, 2022). And J. K. Rowling (1997–2007) has said that the three main characters in the *Harry Potter* series—Harry, Hermione, and Ron—represent different aspects of herself and that some of Harry's experiences mirror the ways she has handled grief and depression in her life (Pugh, 2020).

Most importantly, I have learned how personally significant fantasy writing can be from students themselves. Years ago, one of my students, Tunde, was troubled by racial tension in New York City and wrote a fantasy story in which he was a superhero who helped bring peace to the city. That story was as personally significant to Tunde as any memoir would have been—perhaps more so, as the fantasy genre allowed him to imagine himself as someone with the agency to fight serious problems.

In recent years, as I've had opportunities to teach fantasy writing to my own students and in fantasy "residencies" I've done in classrooms, I've seen students explore topics and themes that are deeply meaningful to them. Students have written fantasy stories that delved into facing fears, being true to themselves when they are different than others, dealing with bullies, reframing their life's experiences to see the good things they've done in them, finding true friendship, the desire to spread their wings beyond the confines of their family of origin, dealing with high expectations set by others, fighting oppression, and many others.

Once I started taking fantasy writing seriously and began paying attention to the many students who want to write fantasy, I learned that *yes*, writing fantasy can be very personally meaningful to children.

Have Faith That Your Students Will Write Fantasy Well

Imagine if we didn't allow children to start playing Little League baseball when they're young because they won't be very good at it at first. If you've ever watched six-year-olds play baseball, it's true they aren't very good. They *approximate* the game and, even though they try to bat and field like the players they watch on television, they are far from being World Series–caliber players! But we know that over time, with instruction and guidance from coaches, they'll gradually get better and that their approximation of the game will get closer and closer to how adults play baseball.

So, if you're not teaching fantasy writing because you fear your students won't be good at it on day one, you're the one creating the obstacle! Consider this: We *do* invite children to write in many other complex genres, from nonfiction books in kindergarten to arguments in seventh grade, and we go into these studies knowing the students won't write in them as well as adult writers. In fact, our goal is for them to "meet the standard" for each kind of writing, which means we're satisfied when their approximations of the genre are a step above where they were at the beginning of the school year.

So why are we so afraid that children won't write fantasy well? I think it's because we feel we don't know how to teach fantasy writing to children and, consequently, we feel ignorant and inadequate. It may also be that we ourselves don't feel creative and imaginative. So we choose to avoid fantasy writing altogether.

Now that you have this book in your hands, I promise I'll give you the guidance you need to teach fantasy effectively!

Create Room in Your Writing Curriculum for Fantasy

Another obstacle you may be facing is that your writing curriculum is already overstuffed with other studies. So how do you make time for fantasy in your writing curriculum? There are several things you can do:

- Substitute a fantasy unit for a personal narrative unit.
- See if some kinds of writing are overrepresented in your curriculum and, if so, substitute fantasy for one of them.
- Shorten the units in your writing curriculum to about four to five weeks, allowing for eight or nine units across the year, thus giving you room in your curriculum for a fantasy writing unit.
- Include some craft and process units in your curriculum in which students can choose the genres they write in (Glover, 2018). Since these units focus on aspects of craft (such as using punctuation as a crafting tool) or on how to navigate an aspect of the writing process (such as how to study mentor texts for craft techniques), students can write in any genre, including fantasy, and incorporate what they're learning in the unit in their writing. Placing these craft and process units after a fantasy unit can give students more opportunities to write fantasy.

I hope you're ready now to begin your quest and learn how to teach fantasy writing to your students. It's time to get on your metaphorical horse, or board your metaphorical spaceship. You *can* rebalance the world of writing for your students and help them bring creativity and imagination into their writing. Let's go!