Ghost Story

It can be anything to introduce the story.

**Example 1:**

On October 31st five years ago, two high school students named Tony and Sally wanted to visit an old house because it was Halloween. Everyone said the house was haunted but, of course, Tony and Sally didn’t believe in ghosts. They waited until 11:30pm and drove to the house. It was a cold and foggy night. Tony parked the car in the driveway. Sally’s eyes grew large.

“Let’s go,” she said in a funny voice.

“Are you sure?” Tony asked.

“Sure,” she said.

They got out of the car and walked quietly to the old house. Sally softly knocked on the front door. It opened mysteriously and they walked inside.

**Example 2:**

Many years ago, an elderly woman died in this house on October 31st. People say she was murdered by a strange man who was seen leaving her house. Ever since then, when there is a full moon, a candle mysteriously appears in the room where she died. One Halloween night, Tony and Sally…

Pair the students and handout the worksheet, one per pair. Explain that they are to create their own scary ghost story (haunted house story, Halloween story), using five scenes (paragraphs) to do so.

(Encourage students to use scratch paper to make their notes and original draft of the story. They should use the worksheet for their final draft.)

Below is a scene by scene list of suggested verbs, adverbs, sounds, adjectives and nouns to guide the students and to make the Ghost Story expressive. They may use as many or as few of these words as they like, they don’t have to use the words in any special order. Review vocabulary with students if these words are to be used. Give a copy of the following list to students to assist them with descriptive writing.

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1. Student ability: Beginner ~ Intermediate
2. Approximate length of lesson: 15+
3. Number of students necessary: 2+
4. Preferred age/maturity: JHS, HS, College, Adult
5. Type of lesson: Group work / Whole class

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**Language Target:** Organizing and writing a ghost story using simple sentences and easy paragraphs. Working with simple past tense verbs with specified nouns and adjectives.

**Note:** Enlarge the worksheet to give students more room to write.

**Setting Up:** Tell the students a short ghost story to help them warm up to this activity. Pepper the story with as many descriptive adjectives and adverbs as possible. A few of the sentences from the story could be written on the board with the adjectives and adverbs underlined. Point out how these descriptive words add color and feeling to a story.

**Getting Started:** Have the whole class decide on the main characters for this story and give them names (such as Tony and Sally).

To help the students get started, assist the whole class in creating a common introductory paragraph. Write it on the board.
Scene #1
Verbs: go, push, open
Adverbs: slowly, quietly, cautiously
Sounds: knock, howl, rustle
Adjectives: scary, large, cool
Nouns: door, wind, leaves

Scene #2
Verbs: see, walk, climb
Adverbs: quickly, nervously, blindly
Sounds: creak, click, sigh
Adjectives: old, haunted, scary
Nouns: upstairs, shadows, table

Scene #3
Verbs: hear, smell, look for
Adverbs: carefully, fearfully, desperately
Sounds: moan, whisper, scratch
Adjectives: terrible, glow, black
Nouns: candle, spider web, eyes

Scene #4
Verbs: scream, run, feel
Adverbs: tearfully, carelessly, suddenly
Sounds: crash, cry, groan
Adjectives: fast, rainy, spooky
Nouns: down stairs, outside, graveyard

Scene #5
Verbs: hit, escape, think
Adverbs: strongly, protectively, regretfully
Sounds: shriek, plop, crunch
Adjectives: cold, windy, wet
Nouns: skeleton, rain, goose bumps

When the students have finished their ghost stories, invite them to read their masterpieces to the whole class.

Variation 1: This worksheet can easily be turned into a whole class creative story telling activity. One student says the first word of a sentence, the next student repeats the word and adds a second, the third student repeats the first two words and adds a third, etc. Continue until Scene One has been created then begin with Scene Two. Students write the words in the appropriate scenes as the story develops.

Variation 2: For practice with spelling, the teacher could simply dictate a five-paragraph story to the students and they write the paragraphs into the appropriate boxes. (To make it more challenging, randomize the paragraphs and ask students to put them into the correct order.

Building Fluency: Invite students to tell their own ghost stories—every culture seems to have a large variety of scary tales.

Writing Practice: This worksheet allows for only five short paragraphs. Dictate a simple five-paragraph story to the students then assign pairs of students one of the paragraphs to re-write; they can add greater detail, further plot and, of course, much more description. When finished, pairs read their newly created paragraphs, one by one, until all five paragraphs have been read.

Contributed by Kelley Seymour