Prop-Me-Up Challenge

Challenge Headings

"G" Inventson is a great inventor. His inventions help lots of people and he always has good ideas. G has three grand-children, Walt, Sue, and Jesse. They are inventors too, and they love their Grandpa, G!

The evil Balzer is also an inventor, but he's not very good at it. He steals ideas and hurts people with his inventions. Balzer is jealous of G and his grand-kids, the Inventsons. He will stop at nothing to prove that he's the best inventor, even if he has to cheat to do it.

One day, Balzer kidnapped G. Now G is a prisoner in Balzer's lab and it's up to G's grand-kids, the Inventsons, to save him before it's too late!

Walt, Sue, and Jesse Inventson rush to Balzer Tower but stop short when they see the challenge before them.

"Look at how high the tower is!" exclaims Walt the oldest, but not always the bravest, Inventson.

"Height doesn't bother me, but what about those giant steel doors?" points out Sue.

"How will we get to the steel doors with all those robot guards in front of the building?" asks Jesse, the daredevil of the group.

The three pause to think for a moment, then Walt snaps his fingers. "Hey! I've got an Idea!"

"Are you guys thinking what I'm thinking?", asks Sue.

"I bet we are!" exclaims Jesse with excitement. "We can build what we need to solve this problem!"

What are the Inventsons going to build? It's up to YOU to finish the story!

Prop-Me-Up Challenge

Introduction

Props are the objects used in a play, show, or movie. These are things like the gadgets in spy movies, or future tech in science fiction shows, or the artifacts in stories about archaeological adventures and magical stories. The Prop-Me-Up Challenge invites you to come up with your own prop to use to complete the above story.

Implementation

Step 1.) Read the story included above. Think about different items you would want the Inventsons to use to save G. Your item (or items) can be real or imaginary.

Step 2.) Once you have an idea of what you want, draw it or build it!

> Option A.) If all you have to work with is paper, pencil and maybe other art supplies like pens, markers or crayons, Draw out your device. Here are some tips:
> 1. Try drawing an item from several views. Show what it looks like on the top, front and side.
> 2. You can also draw it being used by a person to show how it works.
> 3. Use call-outs! Call-outs are labels or short descriptions that you add to your drawings with arrows pointing to the specific detail you are describing.

> Option B.) You can build your prop. Building a prop can be fun. Here are some tips:
> 1. Remember that a prop is just a model. It doesn't have to work!
> 2. Use what you have. Old toys, broken electronics or even just hot glue and cardboard are all you need to build a prop. (Ask a parent or guardian what you can use.)
> 3. If your idea is for something that is too big, make a small model.

Step 3.) Write out how your device would be used in the story.
Another option: Finish the story! Instead of just writing a description of your prop, write the rest of the story.

Lessons Learned

The Prop-Me-Up Challenge is a creative writing, drawing, and building exercise. Students are introduced to the way props are used in a narrative to help tell a story. The physical appearance of a prop and the way an actor can interact with it have a dramatic impact of how well an audience understands the content being communicated.

With regards to product development and industrial design, this challenge is an excellent preparation tool for building a model of a product concept and using the model in a presentation pitch.

Finally, for students who struggle with conventional writing assignments, the Prop-Me-Up Challenge offers the opportunity to approach creative writing in a tangible, tactile way. It allows the student to apply their creativity in ways that they may be more comfortable with or more interested in. The result is a student who may be more motivated to complete the story because they feel a personal connection to its resolution.

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