

**THE GINGERBREAD MAN LOOSE AT CHRISTMAS** by Laura Murray,  
illustrated by Mike Lowery

A Mentor Text Lesson Plan by Marcie Flinchum Atkins



**Writing Skills Focus:**

Write Your Own Adventure  
Word Choice  
Functional Writing (Thank you cards)

**Target Audience:**

Kindergarten-2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

**Objectives:**

Students will write a thank you note (functional writing) to someone that has helped them.  
Students will utilize their knowledge of story structures to create their own holiday adventure.  
Students will utilize seasonal words (word choice) to revise their holiday adventure.

**Standards:**

Kindergarten

K.1 a  
K.2 a, c, d, e, g  
K.6 c  
K.8 a, b  
K.9 e, f, g  
K.12 a, b, c

1<sup>st</sup> Grade

1.1b  
1.2 a, b  
1.5 d  
1.7 e  
1.8 a, b c  
1.9 e, f, g  
1.13 a, b, c, d, g

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

2.2 a, c

2.6 c

2.7 d

2.8 e, f, g, h

2.12 a, b, c, d

2.13 j

**Virginia Standards of Learning:**

Standards are listed here for referencing by number in your lesson plans. For link to complete standards, go to:

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards\\_docs/english/2010/stds\\_all\\_english.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/sol/standards_docs/english/2010/stds_all_english.pdf)

**Common Core:**Kindergarten

ELA

RL.3

W.3, 5

L.5 a, c

1<sup>st</sup> Grade

ELA

RL.3, 4, 9

W.3, 5

SL.4, 5

L.1f, 5a, d

2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

ELA

RL.3, 5

W.3, 5

SL.4, 6

L.1e, 5a, b

Standards are listed here for referencing by number in your lesson plans. For link to complete standards, go to: [http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI\\_ELA%20Standards.pdf](http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_ELA%20Standards.pdf)

**Text(s):**

*The Gingerbread Man Loose at Christmas* by Laura Murray, illustrated by Mike Lowery

**Other Materials Needed:**

Nonfiction texts or online sources about other holidays

- Free online source: <http://www.kidsclick.org/>
- Paid Database subscription: Pebble Go

Thank you card template

Gingerbread Man's Holiday Adventure: *The Gingerbread Man Loose at Christmas*

Gingerbread Man's Holiday Adventure: Planning Sheet

**Lesson:****Setting the purpose:**

This lesson can serve as inspiration for a functional writing exercise. Students can write a thank you note to someone that has helped them.

The purpose of this lesson is to have students analyze a particular text and identify how it is structured. Then students can use this structure to write their own story with a different spin. After students have drafted a story, they can also use the selected mentor text to help them insert specific word choices into their own story.

**Utilizing the Mentor Text**

Read the text THE GINGERBREAD MAN LOOSE AT CHRISTMAS.

**Functional Texts**

1. After reading the text, talk with students about examples of "acts of kindness" from the story. One act of kindness was writing a note.
2. Students can brainstorm people that they would also like to thank or write a note to.
3. Discuss how much of the writing that grownups do is in the form of functional writing: writing for a specific purpose (lists, cards, advertisements, brochures).
4. Talk about what makes a good thank you note. Some examples might be:
  - a. Write the person's name in the form of Dear X,
  - b. Say thank you
  - c. Say what you are thanking them for or what you appreciate
  - d. Closing
5. As a group or individually, have students write thank you notes to people that have been important in their lives. There is a sample Thank You card template at the end of this lesson, if desired.

## Analyzing the Text

1. Students can have the opportunity to write their own Gingerbread Holiday adventure, but before doing that, it's helpful for students to look at the text to see what Murray does with her adventure.
2. Utilize the Gingerbread Man's Holiday Adventure worksheet to have students discuss the elements of the story in *The Gingerbread Man Loose at Christmas*. You can utilize the actual sheet or just have students talk about the structure and make a cart of your own.

## **Transferring the Skill to Student Writing**

### Create Your Own Gingerbread Man Adventure

1. As a class, or in a small group, or individually, have students brainstorm ideas for holiday adventures the Gingerbread Man can have. This is a great time to go through popular American holidays, but it's also a good time to discuss holidays represented in your class through various cultures or religions.

Examples:

New Years Day	St. Patrick's Day	Valentine's Day
Easter	4 <sup>th</sup> of July	Thanksgiving
Halloween	Hanukkah	

2. Students can choose a holiday to research, if they don't know about the holiday they are writing about. They can use online resources or print nonfiction texts (see the Other Materials Needed section for ideas for resources).
3. Once a holiday has been chosen, brainstorm events that could happen with the Gingerbread Man. You can utilize the Gingerbread Man's Holiday Adventure Planning Sheet to help with brainstorming.
4. Write a draft of the Gingerbread Man Holiday Adventure.

### Revising for Word Choice

1. Go back into the story THE GINGERBREAD MAN LOOSE AT CHRISTMAS and make a list of words that Murray uses to let the reader know that it is winter. Older students can even divide the list of words up into parts of speech.

Examples:

white	snowy	holiday lights	jingle bell
jolly ho-ho	merry	frosted	icy
snow	slick	winter-white	

2. Identify what season your holiday adventure is in. Then brainstorm a list of words for that season. For example, if you are writing a story about the Gingerbread Man and the Fourth of July, it's summer. Brainstorm a list of summer words or words associated with the Fourth of July and summertime.
3. When revising, go back and replace bland or more common words with specific seasonal words.

**Other Resources:**

Laura Murray's website: <http://www.lauramurraybooks.com>

Mike Lowery's website: <http://mikelowery.com>

# Thank You Card Template

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

We really appreciate you!

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

We really appreciate you!

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_



## The Gingerbread Man's Holiday Adventure THE GINGERBREAD MAN LOOSE AT CHRISTMAS

**Holiday:** *Christmas*

**What do you know (or what to find out about that holiday)?**

*In this book, it's celebrated as a time of giving.*

**What does the class and the Gingerbread Man want to do to celebrate this holiday?**

*They want to say thank you to important people in their lives.*

**What do they do?**

*They do acts of kindness like baking cookies and making cards.*

**What goes wrong?**

Gingerbread can't keep up with his class. They are running out of time. His feet get mushy in the snow.

**How does Gingerbread Man solve his problem?**

*Gingerbread Man visits a baker who gives him chocolate boots to help him get back.*

**How does it end?**

The boys and girls surprise their teacher with a card because she has helped them the most.



## The Gingerbread Man's Holiday Adventure Planning Sheet

Holiday: \_\_\_\_\_

What do you know (or what to find out about that holiday)?

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What does the class and the Gingerbread Man want to do to celebrate this holiday?

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What do they do?

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What goes wrong?

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How does Gingerbread Man solve his problem?

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How does it end? \_\_\_\_\_