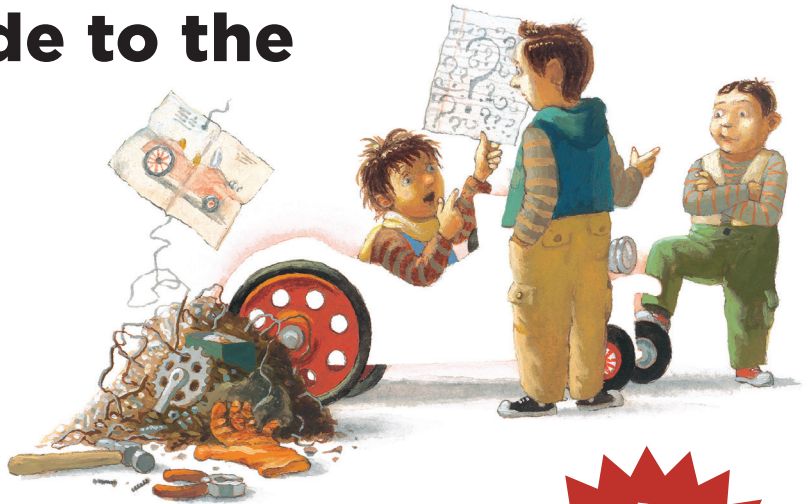


# A Teacher's Guide to the **MAX BOOKS**



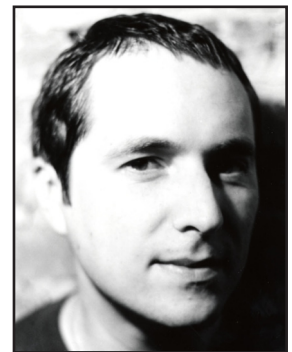
## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**KATE BANKS** is the author of many acclaimed books for children, including the *Boston Globe-Horn Book* award winner *And If the Moon Could Talk*. She lives in the South of France.



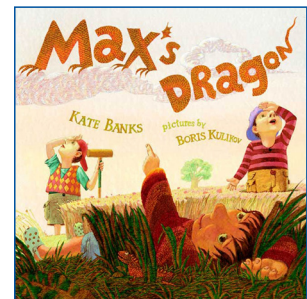
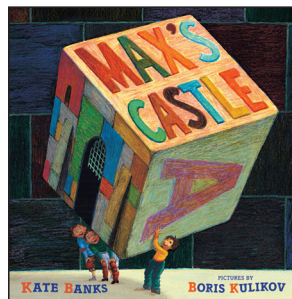
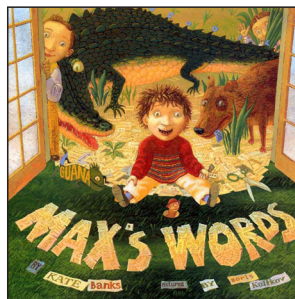
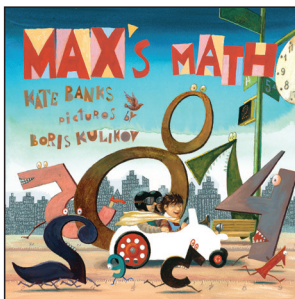
## **ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR**

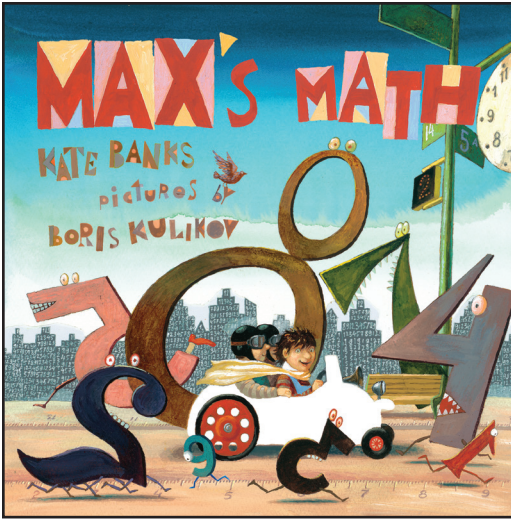
**BORIS KULIKOV** is the critically acclaimed illustrator of many children's books, including most recently *Papa's Mechanical Fish* by Candace Fleming. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.



## **ABOUT THE GUIDE**

This Common Core teaching guide presents a variety of Common Core activities to engage your students in meeting standards in Reading Literature, Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Mathematics while enjoying the Max Books. After engaging in the Pre-Reading Activity for each title, you'll find comprehension questions that will allow you to monitor students' understanding of the text before introducing a wide variety of standards-based activities.





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## PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Share the front and back cover images of *Max's Math* with students and ask them to consider what the story might be about. Ask:

- How are the images on the front and the back different?
- Do both images have something to do with math? In what way?
- What is unusual about the large numbers on the cover?
- Do they help you predict what the story might be about?
- If you have read *Max's Words*, who do you think the two people in the car with Max are?
- If you have read *Max's Words*, how is the font used on the cover different from the one on *Max's Math*? Why do you think this is so?

Scribe each student's favorite image from the cover on the whiteboard. After you have finished reading the book, ask each student whether their favorite image played an important role in the story.

## QUESTIONS TO CHECK COMPREHENSION OF MAX'S MATH

1. What are Max and his brothers in search of as the story opens?
2. At the beginning of the story, has Max actually built a car? How do you know? How do the illustrations help you decide?
3. What things do the brothers find in Shapeville? What clever idea does Max have about the shapes?
4. What problem do the citizens of Count Town have? How do the brothers help?
5. Did Max accomplish his goal by the end of the story? Explain.

## COMMON CORE ACTIVITIES

### Further Adventures of Max

**Kindergarten, Grade One:** Author Kate Banks and illustrator Boris Kulikov have produced four Max books. All books feature Max as the main character and his two brothers, Ben and Karl, as secondary characters. However, the relationship between the brothers is quite different in each story. In addition, the settings and plots are unique to each story. Using a Venn diagram, compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of the characters in all the stories.

### Reading Literature Standard 9

- RL K.9** With prompting and support, compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories.
- RL 1.9** Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.

## Two Towns, Two Problems

**Kindergarten, Grade One, Grade Two:** When Max and his brothers exit the highway in search of problems, they encounter a traffic officer who suggests two destinations: Shapeville and Count Town. Each town has problems that need solving. Ask each student to describe, in words, a problem one of the towns faces. List these problems on the whiteboard. Then challenge students to choose one problem and illustrate, in a detailed drawing, the difficulty it is posing for the town and its residents.

When students have completed their drawings, invite them to restate the problems they have chosen and explain how their illustrations further explain the challenges the problems pose for townsfolk.

### Speaking and Listening Standard 5

- SL K.5** Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.
- SL 1.5** Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.
- SL 2.5** Create audio recordings of stories or poems; add drawings or other visual displays to stories or accounts of experiences when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

## Story Addition

**Kindergarten, Grade One, Grade Two:** After reading *Max's Math* aloud, challenge students to return to the book and locate as many addition problems as they can find in the text. Write out these number sentences in words and then convert them to number equations. Next, building upon an understanding of the situations in the story, invite students to write original number sentences that might also be included in one of the scenes. Ask each child to partner with another student to swap number sentences and convert them into equations.

### Mathematics Standards: Operations and Algebraic Thinking

- K.OA** Understand addition as putting together and adding to, and understand subtraction as taking apart and taking from.
  - K.OA.3** Decompose numbers less than or equal to 10 into pairs in more than one way (e.g., by using objects or drawings) and record each decomposition by a drawing or equation (e.g.,  $5 = 2 + 3$  and  $5 = 4 + 1$ ).
- 1.OA** Represent and solve problems involving addition and subtraction.
  - 1.OA.3** Apply properties of operations as strategies to add and subtract.
- 2.OA** Represent and solve problems involving addition and subtraction.
  - 2.OA.1** Use addition and subtraction within 100 to solve one- and two-step word problems involving situations of adding to, taking from, putting together, taking apart, and comparing, with unknowns in all positions.

## Shapes in Shapeville

**Kindergarten, Grade One, Grade Two:** When Max and his brothers make their way to Shapeville looking for problems, they find that a storm has passed through the town and swept away all of the squares. Max solves the problem by making a square out of two triangles and inspires his brothers to combine triangles into an octagon (stop sign) and a diamond (kite). Supply students with a large number and variety of triangle shapes and sizes and challenge them to create as many other shapes as possible by combining the triangles.

### Mathematics Standards: Geometry

**K.G** Identify and describe shapes (squares, circles, triangles, rectangles, hexagons, cubes, cones, cylinders, and spheres).

**K.G.2** Correctly name shapes regardless of their orientations or overall size.

**1.G** Reason with shapes and their attributes.

**1.G.1** Distinguish between defining attributes (e.g., triangles are closed and three-sided) and non-defining attributes (e.g., color, orientation, overall size); build and draw shapes that possess defining attributes.

**1.G.2** Compose two-dimensional shapes (rectangles, squares, trapezoids, triangles, half circles, and quarter circles) or three-dimensional shapes (cubes, right rectangular prisms, right circular cones, and right circular cylinders) to create a composite shape, and compose new shapes from the composite shape.

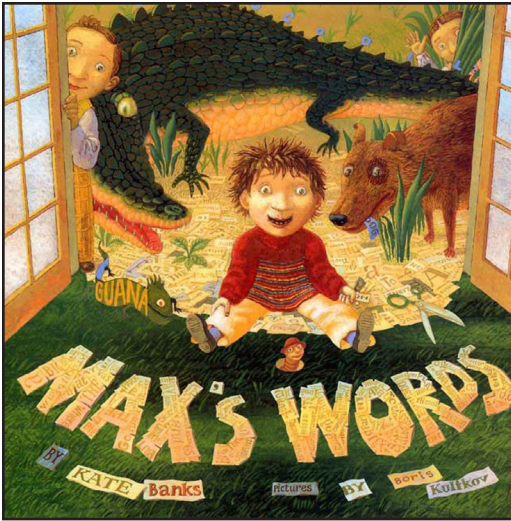
## Paired Socks

**Kindergarten:** Max and his brothers crash through a clothesline in Shapeville and scatter socks in all directions. Max and his brothers sort the socks into pairs and hang them on the clothesline once again. Give your students the same opportunity by providing them a large collection of socks (ensuring that several are quite similar, with only small differences in color, pattern, or size) and ask them, in small groups, to pair up the socks.

### Mathematics Standards: Counting and Cardinality

**K.CC** Compare numbers.

**K.CC.6** Identify whether the number of objects in one group is greater than, less than, or equal to the number of objects in another group, e.g., by using matching and counting strategies.



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## PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Share the front cover of *Max's Words* with students and ask them to consider what the story might be about. Ask:

- How does the cover illustration help to explain the title of the book?
- Which elements in the cover illustration might be real?
- Which elements in the cover illustration seem to be imaginary?
- Who do you think might be the main character of this story?
- Do you think there are other (secondary) characters? Why or why not?
- What do you wonder about as you open the book? Scribe these “wonderings” and check back in with students after you have read the book. Ask: Did the book answer the questions you were wondering about?

## QUESTIONS TO CHECK COMPREHENSION OF *MAX'S WORDS*

1. Why does author Kate Banks begin the story by telling us about Ben and Karl's collections? What do they collect?
2. Why does Max want to have a collection of his own, and what does he decide to collect?
3. How does Max build his collection?
4. What happens when Max arranges his collection by putting words in a different order?
5. What does Max finally decide to do with all of his words, and how do his brothers get involved?

## COMMON CORE ACTIVITIES

### Keys to the Story: Characters, Setting, and Plot

**Kindergarten, Grade One, Grade Two:** Remind students about the three basic literary elements in stories: characters, setting, and major events, or plot.

After reading *Max's Words* aloud, ask students:

- Who is the main character in the story? How do you know? Do the illustrations help you answer this question?
- What is the main character like? How do you know? Describe him by using details from the story.
- Who are the other (secondary) characters in the story? Of those three characters, which two are the most important to the events in the story?
- Where does the story primarily take place? What is the main setting? Describe it using key details from the text and illustrations.
- In the middle of the story, why do the illustrations show a change of setting? What brings this other setting to life? Describe this setting using key details from the text and, especially, the illustrations.
- What are the most important events of the story? Why do you think so?

**Grade Two:** Ask students to think about Max's personality. How does his personality influence his decision to build a collection of his own? What might he have done instead? How does Max's collection help him get what he wanted in the first place—a stamp and a coin from his brothers?

### Reading Literature Standard 3: Key Ideas and Details

**RL K.3** With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

**RL 1.3** Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

**RL 2.3** Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

## A Collection of Words

**Kindergarten:** Focusing on the words that Max adds to his collection (those illustrated in varying fonts in the text and illustrations), ask students to identify any of the words that are unfamiliar to them. Write these words on index cards. Then, challenge students to use a primary-level dictionary to do what Max did and find other words they do not know. Write these words on index cards also.

**Grade One:** In the story, Max collects words that make him feel good: “park,” “baseball,” “dogs,” “hugs.” Challenge each student to create a list of at least four words that make him/her feel good. Write them on index cards.

**Grade Two:** Ask students how the words that Max chooses to add to his collection (those illustrated in varying fonts in the text and illustrations) add meaning to the story. Ask each student to write four or more favorite words on index cards.

**Kindergarten, Grade One, Grade Two:** Create a set of index cards with all the featured words that Max collects throughout the story. Next, combine these cards with the cards you have created with your students in the grade-appropriate activity above. Then, as a class, create a story, as Max and his brothers do. Ask students to be sure the story has at least one character, a clear setting, and a beginning, middle, and end. If students need more words, allow them to add more as Max does in the story.

**Kindergarten, Grade One, Grade Two:** After reading *Max's Words* aloud, launch a Personal Words Collection project in which students develop a personal collection of their favorite words, written on slips of paper or cut from magazines and newspapers. During the first weeks of the project, you may want to use Max's collection building categories as guidance:

- small words
- big words
- words that make you feel good
- words naming things you like to eat
- words people say to you
- words for your favorite colors
- words you do not know

When enough words have been collected, challenge students to organize some of the words into interesting sentences and share them with the class. If time allows, invite students to illustrate their sentences as illustrator Boris Kulikov does in *Max's Words* when Max creates these sentences:

- A blue crocodile ate the green iguana.
- The blue iguana ate a green crocodile.

### Reading Literature Standard 4: Craft and Structure

- RL K.4** Ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.
- RL 1.4** Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.
- RL 2.4** Describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.

## Your Experience, Your Words

**Kindergarten, Grade One, Grade Two:** Read *Max's Words* aloud in order to launch this writing activity built upon a common classroom experience. After a special classroom event (e.g., a guest speaker or reader), a schoolwide event (e.g., a visiting author or performer), or a field trip, brainstorm an exhaustive list of words that apply to the experience and post them on the wall or whiteboard for all to see.

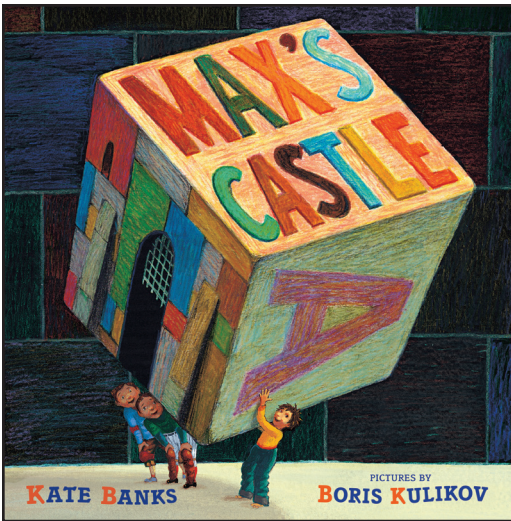
Then invite students to write (or draw, and dictate if they are Kindergartners) a narrative of the event, relating the happenings in order. As students write their narratives, if they think of additional words that should be added to the word list, add them for all to use.

Remind students to use temporal words (e.g., first, second, then, next, etc.) that signal order. Help them write a final sentence that provides a sense of closure.

### Writing Standard 3: Text Types and Purposes

- W K.3** Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.
- W 1.3** Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.
- W 2.3** Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings; use temporal words to signal event order; and provide a sense of closure.





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## PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Share the front cover of *Max's Castle* with students and ask: How do you think the alphabet block might be related to castles? What clues do you see?

Then, supply each of four groups with a set of alphabet blocks (see letters below for each group) and ask them to make at least two words from their blocks. [Note: If your blocks are limited to a single set, have groups take turns. If alphabet blocks are not available, use index cards instead.]

- Group One: W, A, L, L, H, S
- Group Two: M, O, A, T, B
- Group Three: K, I, N, G, H, T
- Group Four: S, W, O, R, D

## QUESTIONS TO CHECK COMPREHENSION OF *MAX'S CASTLE*

1. What is Max searching for under his bed at the beginning of the story?
2. How do his brothers respond to the block at first?
3. As Max starts to build, do his brothers change their minds? Why?
4. What is the key to the events of the story? What makes the events happen?
5. How do the brothers return to the real world at the end of the story?

## COMMON CORE ACTIVITIES

### Medieval Vocabulary

**Kindergarten:** Begin with the Pre-Reading activity. Then, before they read the book, introduce students to vocabulary from the story that may be unfamiliar to them, including:

moat  
knight  
babble  
dungeon  
catastrophe  
adder  
bugle  
damsel  
feat  
tapestry  
parapet

Finally, read *Max's Castle* aloud to students, taking time to notice how author Kate Banks incorporates these words into *Max's Castle*.



## Reading Literature Standard 4: Craft and Structure

**RL K.4** Ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.

### Word Transformations

**Kindergarten, Grade One, Grade Two:** After reading *Max's Castle* aloud, ask students a series of questions to be sure they understand how each word transformation works. For example, ask:

1. What blocks did Max use to build **WALLS** and **HALLS**?
2. What blocks did Max use to construct a **MOAT** around the castle and then a **BOAT** to use in the water?
3. What did Max have to do to turn the **PIRATES** into **RAT PIES**?

Once children are familiar with the questioning process, ask them to devise and then answer the questions that apply on each page.

## Speaking and Listening Standard 3

- SL K.3** Ask and answer questions in order to seek help, get information, or clarify something that is not understood.
- SL 1.3** Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to gather additional information or clarify something that is not understood.
- SL 2.3** Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to clarify comprehension, gather additional information, or deepen understanding of a topic or issue.

### Building/Drawing Other Worlds

**Kindergarten, Grade One:** After you read and discuss *Max's Castle*, read *Harold and the Purple Crayon* aloud to students. Using a Venn diagram, ask students to compare and contrast the two stories. Ask guiding questions, such as:

- How are Max and Harold similar?
- How are they different?
- How are Max's and Harold's experiences the same and how are they different?

## Reading Literature Standard 9: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- RL K.9** With prompting and support, compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories.
- RL 1.9** Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.

## Found Words

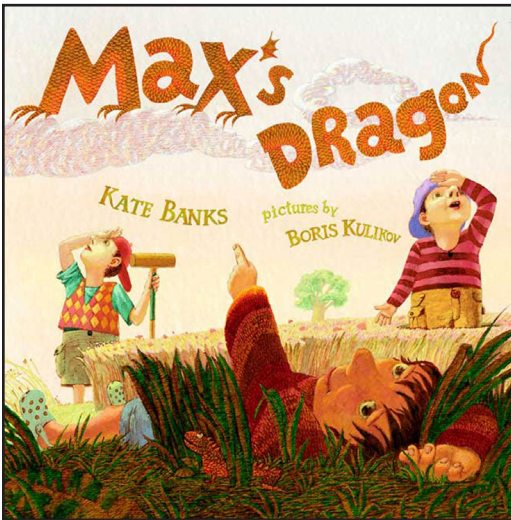
**Kindergarten, Grade One, Grade Two:** Supply students with piles of alphabet blocks or index cards with one letter on each side.

1. Invite students to spell one word with their blocks/cards.
2. Challenge students to create a new word by rearranging all of the letters in the word they first created, as Max does when he transforms **DRAWER** into **REWARD** or **DAMSEL** into **MEDALS**.
3. Challenge students to find a smaller word within their original word, as Max does when he finds a **KEY** in **MONKEY** or **HOPE** and **STAR** in **CATASTROPHE**.
4. Challenge students to add one letter to their original, shorter word to create a longer word, as Max does when he creates **LADDER** from **ADDER**.
5. Challenge students to change one letter in their original word to create a new word, as Max does when he changes **GUN** into **BUN** and **JAM** into **HAM**.

### Reading Literature Standard 9: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

**RL K.9** With prompting and support, compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in familiar stories.

**RL 1.9** Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories



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## PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Using Post-it notes or paper, obscure the word “Dragon” on the front cover of *Max’s Dragon*. Share the front cover image with students and ask: What do you think Max may be seeing in the clouds? Do the “feet” on Max’s name give you any clues? What about the apostrophe? Now share the back cover. Ask: Do you see an image on the back cover that lets you know what the story is about?

Unmask the word “Dragon” to allow children to see if they predicted correctly.

## QUESTIONS TO CHECK COMPREHENSION OF MAX’S DRAGON

1. What is Max searching for at the beginning of the story?
2. How do his brothers respond to his announcement that he has a dragon?
3. Do his brothers change their minds as the storm begins? Why?
4. How do the brothers stop the storm?
5. How does the story end and how is the ending different from the beginning?

# COMMON CORE ACTIVITIES

## Rhyming Word Pairs

**Kindergarten, Grade One, Grade Two:** Begin this activity by asking students to go on a hunt for all the rhyming word pairs in *Max's Dragon*. Listen for:

found—ground  
dragon—wagon  
hide-and-peek—peek  
tail—trail  
trying—flying  
there—air  
uh-oh—oh, no  
faster—disaster  
sneeze—breeze  
fury—worry  
roar—pour  
fell—well  
stay—day  
best—rest  
round—ground  
learn—turn  
over—clover  
wicket—thicket  
upset—wet  
see—three

Once your list is complete, ask Kindergartners whether there are any words on this list that they are not familiar with and help them to define them. Ask First Graders to identify all the rhyming words that a) suggest feelings or b) appeal to one of the five senses. Highlight them in different colors. Ask Second Graders to describe how these rhymed word pairs play an important role in the plot of the story. What power do they have?

### Reading Literature Standard 4: Craft and Structure

**RL K.4** Ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.

**RL 1.4** Identify words and phrases in stories or poems that suggest feelings or appeal to the senses.

**RL 2.4** Describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.

## Writing in Rhyme

**Kindergarten, Grade One, Grade Two:** Challenge your students to write an additional scene in which Max's dragon has awoken or the dinosaur has been released from the well and the brothers must use rhymes in the dialogue between them to make something happen in the scene.

Ask Kindergartners to use drawing and dictation in addition to writing for their stories. Ask First and Second Graders to write their narratives with events in logical order, adding details to describe the brothers and their actions and using carefully chosen words to signal the order of the events and the final scene.

### Writing Standard 3

- W K.3** Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.
- W 1.3** Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events; include some details regarding what happened; use temporal words to signal event order; and provide some sense of closure.
- W 2.3** Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings; use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.



This guide was prepared by Toni Buzzeo, M.A., M.L.I.S., children's author, educational consultant, and school librarian. [www.tonibuzzeo.com](http://www.tonibuzzeo.com)