

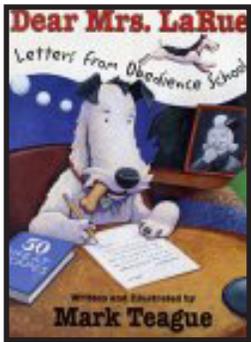


CRUCHLEY'S COLLECTION

Diana Cruchley is an award-winning educator and author, who has taught at elementary and secondary levels. Her workshops are practical, include detailed handouts, and are always enthusiastically received.

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DEAR MRS. LARUE



Ike is sent to Obedience School because he misbehaves. Read his heart-rending letters to his master in this witty story. With each letter, see the luxury in which he is really living, with the black and white picture of what he is writing about. Ike eventually escapes, returns home, and rescues his owner.

Mark Teague, Scholastic, 2002, ISBN 0-439-20663-4

DOUBLE TALES

Instead of using illustrations as is done in this story, students could take advantage of what is being described by the narrator not being the same as reality. On the left side of the page, they tell the story the narrator is making up. On the right side of the page, they tell the real story.

This could even be used in Social Studies where the right side of the page tells a researched story such as an explorer's voyage and the left side the sailor's version (who deeply regrets the trip for various reasons.)

ENVELOPE BOOKS

The Jolly Postman, and several other clever books, advance the story through a series of letters. Students will enjoy binding envelopes into a hand-made book and including a letter in each envelope.

THE SERIES OF LETTERS

Students can create their own *Dear Mrs. LaRue* stories, building a series of letters from their hero who is in camp and wants to come home, or is at a new school, or is in the army. Any change can lend itself to a series of letters, even something as mundane as moving.

CRIME AND POINT OF VIEW

The newspaper story recounts the various "crimes" that Ike has committed. When you have read the newspaper story, list the crimes on the board. Ask students to listen for Ike's excuses for the events as they go through.

When you have finished the book and the discussion, you can also take a look at how Mark Teague built the solution into the story in one of the 4 excuses that Ike has. Have them try to reproduce this skill in a story that they are writing.

His crimes were:

- Stealing food off the counter
- Chasing cats
- Howling at night
- Pulling his master down and tearing her coat.

NEWSPAPER STORY

This story begins and ends with a newspaper story, thus providing a good opportunity to teach how this genre is written using the two letters in the story as models. The 4W's are particularly important, as are writing in descending order of importance, and finally ensuring that there are quotes from the main participants in the story (see the potential evaluation criteria that follow).

MARK TEAGUE AND MAKING THINGS UP

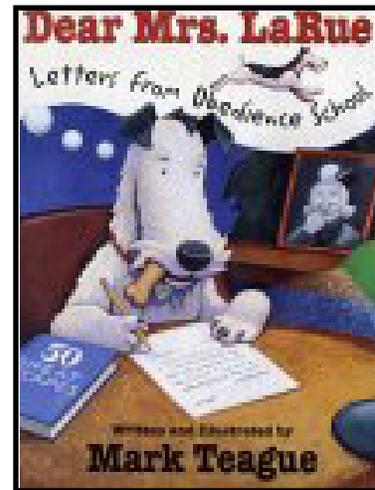
Another Mark Teague book is *The Secret Shortcut*. In this book a group of friends are always late for school - because of an alien attack, or any other excuse they can make up. One day they decide to take *The Secret Shortcut* to get to school on time and discover some real adventures. A part of the theme of this story is also "making things up." Students can compare the two stories.

LOCAL DOG ENTERS OBEDIENCE SCHOOL

Citing a long list of behavioral problems, Snort City resident Gertrude R. LaRue yesterday enrolled her dog, Ike, in the Igor Brotweiler Canine Academy. Established in 1953, the Academy has a history of dealing with such issues.

“I’m at my wit’s end!” said Mrs. LaRue. “I love Ike, but I’m afraid he’s quite spoiled. He steals food right off the kitchen counter, chases the neighbor’s cats, howls whenever I’m away, and last week while I was crossing the street he pulled me down and tore my best camel’s hair coat! I just don’t know what else to do!”

School officials were unavailable for comment...



My story has:

- What, where, when, why at the beginning of the story.
- At least two quotes from interviews.
- Starts with the most important elements, and ends with the least.
- Short paragraphs – not more than 2-3 sentences.
- An action-oriented headline.