

Written by Barbara Kanninen  
**A Story With Pictures**  
Illustrated by Lynn Rowe Reed

## ~STORY SUMMARY~

When an author loses her manuscript, the illustrator decides to take charge, painting characters that would never appear in the author's book—including the author herself! Through this energetic tale, students will laugh and learn as a duck offers tips about character, setting, conflict, and other basic elements of a story.

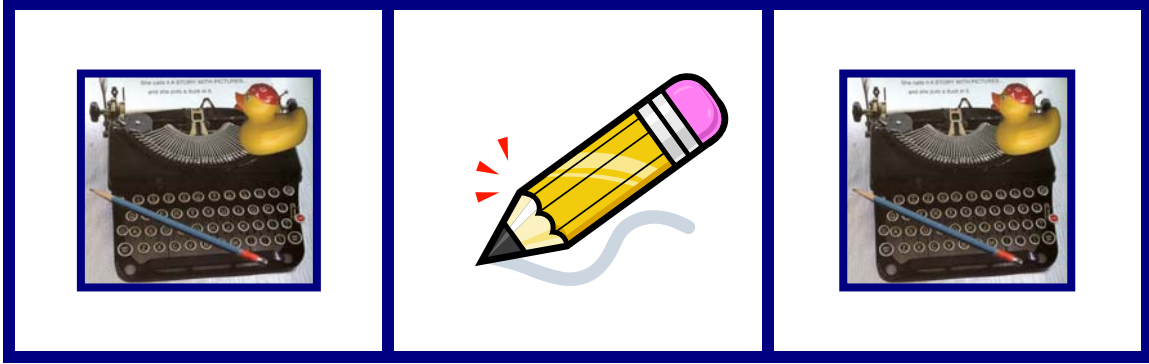
A laugh-out-loud book kids will adore and a book teachers will reach for time and time again to introduce/reinforce the writing process and story elements in grades K-8!

## ~ABOUT THE AUTHOR~

Barbara Kanninen is a children's writer and Ph.D. environmental economist. She enjoys baseball, choral singing, apple picking, movies without car chases and doing crazy things with her family, like riding peddle cars around beach towns. She has had a number of stories and poems published in children's magazines such as *Highlights*, *Ladybug* and *Fun for Kidz*. Be sure to look for her other books: *Jake's Lemonade Stand*, (Kaeden Books, September 2007) and her forthcoming book, *Circle Rolls* (Henry Holt and Co.) Visit her website at [www.barbarakanninen.com](http://www.barbarakanninen.com).

## ~ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR~

Lynn Rowe Reed has illustrated several books for children including *Punctuation Takes a Vacation* and *Nouns and Verbs Have a Field Day* by Robin Pulver. Visit her website at [www.lynnrowereed.com](http://www.lynnrowereed.com) for more information.



The following activities were created by Lisa Mullarkey and can be adapted to all grade levels and curriculum needs. Lisa is an elementary school teacher, librarian, and children's author. Please visit [www.lisamullarkey.com](http://www.lisamullarkey.com) for more information.

## ~THE WRITING PROCESS~

Reading *A Story with Pictures* is the perfect way to kick off the school year and introduce/review the writing process with your students: Pre-Writing, Drafting, Revision, Editing, and Publication. Cite examples of how the author in this story is using the writing process. After reading the story, have your students go through their writing folders and pick a story that's ready for revision and editing.

## ~BACKPACK QUACK ATTACK~

In the story, the duck keeps the story in his backpack. Have each child bring in a small item that fits easily into a backpack. Have students work in pairs to write a new story from Ducks point of view. The story must include each item found in the backpack. Get creative! The story must have a problem and a solution. When everyone is finished, share the stories and marvel at the creativity of each unique one! For younger grades, write one class story instead. It might be fun to pass the backpack off to another class and ask them to compose a story. Compare the two.

## ~ONOMATOPOEIA~

Onomatopoeia is a word that imitates the sound it's describing such as "click," "buzz," "pow" or animal noises such as "oink", "quack", and "meow." Sprinkling these words into a story is fun! Reread the book and look for examples of this type of word in the story. See attached activity.

## ~LUCKY DUCK~

(Writing a Friendly Letter)

Discuss: Duck saves the day and prevents the author from writing what she calls a boring story. You may want to introduce/define the term "muse" and ask the students who/what inspires them and helps them generate ideas/thoughts for their stories.

Activity: Have each student write a *Thank You* letter from the author to Duck. Review "friendly letter format" with greeting/salutation, date, and closing.

## ~TYPEWRITER vs. COMPUTER~

(Fun Center Activity)

Most children have never used a typewriter. If you can find one that works, set it up next to the computer. Have children type a short paragraph or a few sentences on each. Which one was easier? Why? Have them imagine the "olden days" when authors had to use a typewriter to write an entire novel. Brainstorm a list of reasons why computers make an author's job easier. (Cut/paste to make changes, spell check readily available, no correction fluid, etc.)

## ~DUCK, DUCK GOOSE~

In honor of Duck, why not play a game of *Author, Author, Illustrator* based on Duck, Duck, Goose?

## ~LIBRARY FUN~

Don't be surprised if your students want to learn more about ducks after reading this book. Brainstorm a list of locations in the library that materials about ducks can be found. Here are some to get you started: "E" section, nonfiction, magazines, videos, Read-A-Long Tapes, joke section, poetry, encyclopedias, even sports section: Anaheim Ducks. Once list is completed, bring class to the library to locate areas/materials.

## ~AUTOBIOGRAPHY/BIOGRAPHY~

**Discuss:** Near the end of the book, the author writes, "Boy, oh boy, if I were the author of this book, I'd write about ME!" When you write a story about yourself, it's called an autobiography.

**ASK:** Has anyone ever read an autobiography? (List titles on board and have several available for the kids to explore.)

**ASK:** If you were writing an autobiography, tell us one interesting fact that you'd include in it. (Kids can work as whole group or in pairs.)

**Discuss:** If someone writes a book about someone else's life, it's called a biography. (List titles on board and have several available for the kids to explore.)

**ASK:** Name a person you'd like to learn more about? (Make list and encourage them to visit the biography section in the library to see if one's available.)

## ~OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS~

Open-ended questions are tools that encourage children's creative thought, problem-solving skills, and cognitive growth.

1. **Retell the plot elements:** Why is the author having such a difficult time getting her story completed?
2. **Make an inference -** What character traits do ducks possess? Why does the author use a duck as an antagonist?
3. **Relate to Self:** How would you solve the problem(s) in this story? In what ways do people learn to work together in cooperative situations?

## ~CHARACTER GRID~

Use five adjectives to describe the author and Duck. Can you come up with ten different adjectives? No repeats! (Do together as a class or see attached sheet.)

## ~CLOZE STATEMENTS~

In the book, the author is not happy about the duck being in the story. She starts to say, "Ducks are so..." and stops because the duck nibbles on her hand. She ends up saying, "Ducks are so cute." What else could she have said? Have the class brainstorm sentences together and record on board or see attached activity.

## ~SPICE IT UP!~

The author says her story is BORING! She needs to spice it up! Using figurative language is a way authors can make their stories more exciting. Alliteration, stronger verbs, similes, and use of metaphors are just a few ways to make your stories POP and more exciting. One of your goals as an author is to "paint a picture" in the reader's mind. Can you expand sentences to go from BORING to BAM? Complete together on board or see attached activity.

Example:

**BORING:** The car went down the road.

**BAM!** The cool, carrot-colored car raced down the rocky road like a rocket blasting into space.

## ~POETRY~

After reading *A Story with Pictures*, your students will be inspired to write and create stories and poems of their own. If you've always wanted to write poetry with your students but didn't know where to begin, grab Paul Janeczko's *Guide to HOW TO WRITE POETRY* (Scholastic, 2001) and get started. A must for all bookshelves!

## ~PERSUASIVE WRITING~

People write for many different purposes. Four main types of writing are:

- Narrative (to tell a story)
- Descriptive (to create a clear picture)
- Expository (to give information)
- Persuasive (to convince the reader)

Discuss the end of the story with your students. Ask: Name a character you think the author should use in her next book. Should the duck be the main character? Why or why not? The Tooth Fairy? An astronaut? The President of the United States? YOU?

Assignment: Pick one character you'd like the author to use in her story. You must persuade her to pick your character...not one of your classmate's. THINK: Why should she pick your character? How will your character enhance the story? Write a persuasive letter to the author to convince her that your character is the best choice-the only choice-for her story. Be sure to defend your decision.

## ~ELEMENTS OF A STORY~

All good writers use story elements when thinking/writing a story: plot, characters, setting, conflict (problem/solution), and climax. Identify these elements in *A Story with Pictures* and create a plot chart. To practice identifying these elements, find them in your favorite picture books or novels.

## WHOSE BOOK IS IT ANYWAY?

TEACHER BACKGROUND: Most people are surprised to learn that the author and the illustrator share the profits of the book 50/50. Once the manuscript is complete, the author is usually not allowed to contact the illustrator for any reason. When the author sees the completed book for the first time, it's fun to see how the illustrator interpreted his/her words. Sometimes, the author is very surprised to see that the illustrator changed her characters from what he/she envisioned (like people) to something the illustrator envisioned like animals, insects, or even aliens!

ACTIVITY-A Debate: Divide the class into two groups. Ask: Does the illustrator have the right to draw what he/she wants as long as the words stay the same? Should the author be allowed to tell the illustrator what she/he wants in the book? Should the author be allowed to tell the author what his/her characters should look like or what the setting should/shouldn't include? What if the author intended "Billy" to be a red-headed kindergarten student and the illustrator made him a dinosaur? (It happens!) Can the author force the illustrator to redo illustrations? Why or why not? Each group should be prepared to defend either the author's or illustrator's point of view. Let the debate begin!

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## ***A STORY WITH PICTURES***

by Barbara Kanninen

Remember, one of your goals as an author is to "paint a picture" in the reader's mind. Using figurative language is a way authors can make their stories more exciting. (Think about our lesson today and the techniques we used!) Can you expand these sentences to go from BORING to BAM?

Example:

**BORING:** The car went down the road.

**BAM!** The cool, carrot-colored car raced down the rocky road like a rocket blasting into space.

**BORING:** The dog barked.

**BAM!:**

---

---

---

**BORING:** It was windy on the beach.

**BAM!:**

---

---

---

**BORING:** My tooth hurt.

**BAM!:**

---

---

---

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

***A STORY WITH PICTURES***

by Barbara Kanninen

**~CHARACTER GRID~**

How would you describe the character traits of the author and the duck? Think of five adjectives for both characters...try not to use the same adjective twice.

AUTHOR:	DUCK:
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
*	*
*	*

**BONUS:** If you can think of more than five descriptive words, write them where you see the \*.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

***A STORY WITH PICTURES***

by Barbara Kanninen

The author didn't like the slippers the illustrator drew on her. Can you design a pair of slippers you think she'd like? Can you write down five descriptive words (adjectives) to describe them?

My slippers are \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Be sure you have five words!)

~ART SMART~

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

***A STORY WITH PICTURES***

by Barbara Kanninen

Near the end of the story, the author asks the duck to tell her what kind of setting should be in the book. Pretend you are duck and draw the setting that you feel would be "picture perfect" for the author.

~ART SMART~

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## *A STORY WITH PICTURES*

by Barbara Kanninen

In the book, the author is not happy about the duck being in the story. She's angry to see him and starts to say, "Ducks are so...." and stops because he bites her hand. She ends up saying, "Ducks are so cute." What else could she have said? Here's your chance to be an author!

1. Ducks are \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

2. Ducks are \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

3. Ducks are \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

4. Ducks are \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

5. Ducks are \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## ***A STORY WITH PICTURES***

by Barbara Kanninen

Now that you know what **ONOMATOPOEIA** means, here's your chance to collect some of these words to use in your own stories. You have ten minutes to collect one word from each member of your class. (They'll write a word in the empty space below.) No duplicate words allowed: if someone writes a word already written below, he'll have to think up a new one to write down. Don't forget...you'll have to give a word to all of your friends, too! Ready? Set? **KABAM!** (Note: if you have 20 classmates, you'll have 20 different examples of onomatopoeia below.)