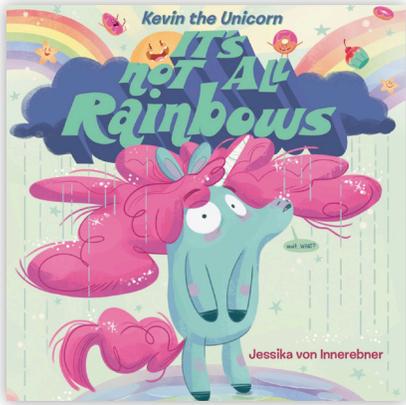


# Build a Story Mountain with *Kevin the Unicorn: It's Not All Rainbows*

Teacher Notes from Jennifer Parisi



## ***Kevin the Unicorn: It's Not All Rainbows*** Jessika von Innerebner

This lesson is dedicated to all teachers, students, families and authors. In the book, Kevin modeled how to share his feelings of frustration. By doing this, he felt empathy from others, and he learned that he was not alone. Be kind to yourself and remember, as Kevin says, "It's okay to have a bad day."

The framework for this activity was inspired by the "Uh-oh! Phew!" lesson in *The Reading Strategies Book* by Jennifer Serravallo.

I hope you enjoy the lesson!  
– Jennifer Parisi

## About the Author

Jennifer is a third grade teacher in Barrington, Illinois. In her free time, she is drawn to her sketchbook, where she plans new content to produce, whether it be a new puppet, SEL videos or lesson plans.

- This lesson has been designed with students in Grades 2-6 in mind. Please make modifications for your classes accordingly.
- Students will fill in a story mountain after reading the book, then create their own, so they will need paper and a pencil.
- It is recommended that you read the whole book through with your class before you begin creating story mountains.
- Use the slides to guide your class through the activity. In addition to directed tasks, there will be prompts for quick conversations throughout. Encourage students to share responses whenever you'd like.

## Learning Targets:

- Using a story mountain, I can identify parts of a story: exposition, conflict, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution.
- I can create a story mountain based on a story that I create.

## Resources:

Access the Story Mountain Graphic Organizer.  
[follettk12.link/f41](https://follettk12.link/f41)

Watch the Penguin book trailer.  
[tinyurl.com/FSS-Trailer](https://tinyurl.com/FSS-Trailer)

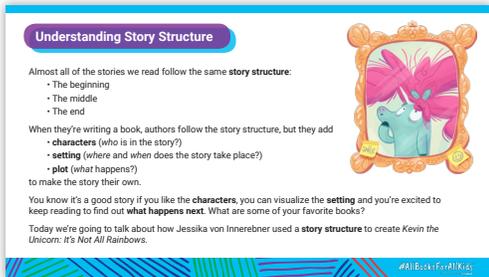
Watch Jessika von Innerebner read the book.  
[tinyurl.com/FSS-ReadBook](https://tinyurl.com/FSS-ReadBook)

Learn to draw Kevin the unicorn.  
[tinyurl.com/FSS-DrawKevin](https://tinyurl.com/FSS-DrawKevin)



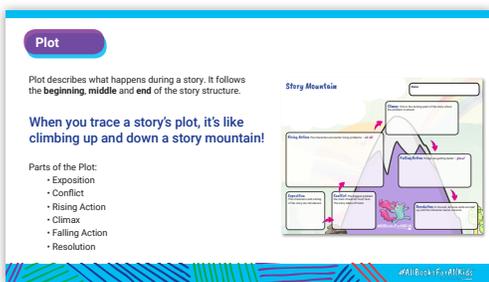
**Slide 1 - Title Slide** ([Click here to access the student slides.](#))

- Ask the class for a summary of the book.
- Turn the discussion of plot points to topics surrounding social and emotional learning – what feelings were troubling Kevin the unicorn?
- How did he resolve what was bothering him?



**Slide 2**

- Explain to students that they're all familiar with the parts of the story – almost all stories follow the same format! That format is called a **story structure**.
- Talk about how many stories begin with “Once upon a time...” and end with “...and they lived happily ever after.” Ask your students if they know what these stories are called. (Fairy tales!) These phrases are cues that the author gives the reader to indicate that the story is starting and that it’s over.
- While most stories aren’t this obvious about their **story structure**, authors do include signals for the reader to recognize a problem faced by the main character, to feel suspense as the character navigates through the problem and to feel relief when the problem is solved. We also look for clues that the character’s outlook on life has changed a little bit, and that they will settle down into a “new normal.”
- The first discussion you can have centers on helping students understand the elements that help create a good book – the characters, the setting and the plot.
- Ask students to share their favorites of each of these elements, either with a neighbor or as a whole class.



**Slide 3**

- The **plot** of a story follows the story structure in that it has a beginning, middle and end. But it covers more than just the basics – it covers a whole series of events that rise and fall...this is what we’ll call the story mountain with students. (Refer to diagram on the slide as you explain each stop on the journey up and down the mountain).
  1. There’s the introduction of characters and the setting – the **exposition**.
  2. Then there will be a problem, where the main character begins a journey – the **conflict**.
  3. Along the way, the problems keep popping up, leading us through the **rising action**. *Uh-oh!*

4. The **climax** of the series of events is when the character makes a choice – and that choice resolves their conflict. There has been growth.
5. Now the **falling action** begins, as we see how life has changed for the character now that this conflict has been resolved. *Phew!*
6. The **resolution** is important because it's where the reader can detect what lesson has been learned.

**Creating a Story Mountain**

Let's create a story mountain based on the plot of the book. Along the way, we will...

- Talk about the **exposition** by naming the characters and describing the setting.
- Identify the main **conflict**.
- Notice problems during the **rising action** – uh oh!
- Determine the **climax** – the most exciting part when the conflict gets solved.
- Notice the **falling action**, where things get better – phew!
- Decide on the **resolution**, or lessons learned.

After we create a story mountain based on the book, it will be your turn to create your own story about Kevin the unicorn!

Draw a story mountain!



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**Slide 4**

- This slide offers a preview to students of what their two tasks will be after reading the book.
  - The first task is to outline the plot of *Kevin the Unicorn: It's Not All Rainbows* using a story mountain that they draw or that you print for them. [Click here to access the story mountain.](#)
  - The next task will be to create a new plot for Kevin the unicorn and outline the plot that they've created using a new graphic organizer.

**Exposition and Conflict**

This is when the characters and the setting of the story are introduced. We also begin to understand the main character's problem, or conflict.

Let's discuss!

- Who are some of the characters in *Kevin the Unicorn: It's Not All Rainbows*?
- Where and when does the story take place?
- What is the main problem the main character is dealing with? Think of it as "character vs. problem."

Fill in the exposition and conflict on your story mountain!



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**Slides 5-14**

- These are the slides you'll use to talk students through selecting elements of the book and placing them on their first story mountain.
- Go through each part of the story mountain, and alternate between asking them to figure out elements alone, in pairs or in small groups.

**What do you think?**

We can all relate to Kevin. We all have difficult days and try to keep positive, even when it's hard.

Let's discuss!

- Think about the part of the story where Kevin kept a smile on his face even though his insides didn't feel smiley at all. Is keeping a smile on your face when you're having a bad day helpful? Why or why not?



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**Slide 15**

- These questions are for students to answer independently, in pairs, in small groups or as a class – however they feel comfortable. This is the point in the story where the main conflict is introduced in the story, so it's a good place for reflection, an element of social and emotional learning.

**Now it's your turn!**

**Goals:**

- I can change the setting and events based upon the story's location.
- I can use a story mountain to tell important events of the story.

Change the setting for Kevin and create a story mountain for Kevin's new adventure!

Ideas:

- The jungle
- The desert
- Outer space
- Somewhere totally crazy - use your imagination!

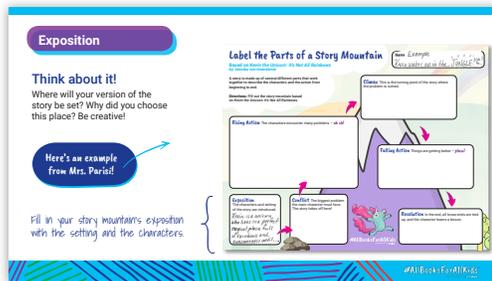
Create a story mountain for your new story!



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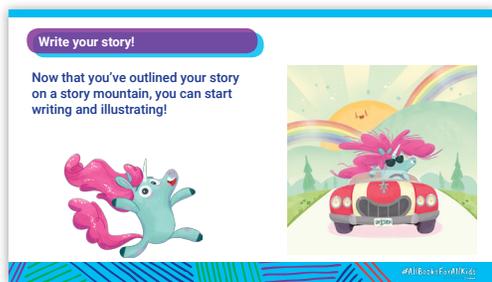
**Slide 16**

- Introduce students to the idea of taking a basic story structure (beginning, middle, end) and adding all the plot elements to create a story of their own with Kevin the unicorn but a different setting.
- To get them started, brainstorm some places where a story with Kevin the unicorn could take place. The jungle? Space? The desert? If their story were set in one of those places, how would the plot be different? Would Kevin the unicorn act differently? They can add on to or subtract any details from the original book.



**Slides 17-21**

- These are the slides you'll use to guide students to create their own story. For the "Think about it!" questions, they can brainstorm alone or with a neighbor.
- Be sure students' ideas follow the plot they've chosen, not the plot of the book! And ask them to check with you or with another student that the conflict is reasonable and can be solved in a short story.
- Remind students to stay on topic and try not to add TOO many *uh-oh!*s before reaching the story's climax!
- The climax should resolve the conflict in a way that the character shows growth.
- Don't let them forget the falling action! The *phew!*s can be the most satisfying part of the story.



Optional Extension Activities:

**Slide 22**

- Students can write their story using the story mountain that they created as a guide. They can use paper and art supplies or use one of these websites to create their story online:
  - Storybird ([tinyurl.com/FSS-PictureBook](http://tinyurl.com/FSS-PictureBook))
  - Storyboard That ([tinyurl.com/FSS-Storyboard](http://tinyurl.com/FSS-Storyboard))
  - Story Jumper ([tinyurl.com/FSS-Story](http://tinyurl.com/FSS-Story))
- Students can write their story, then read it on Flipgrid, and their classmates can ask questions or give feedback.

Questions or Comments?

If you have any questions about the lesson, please don't hesitate to reach out to me! You can reach me at [jenniferparisi714@gmail.com](mailto:jenniferparisi714@gmail.com) or on Twitter @ijenparisi.

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