

Lesson Plan *for* Marvelous Middle Grade Reads

To Night Owl From Dogfish

Written by Holly Goldberg Sloan & Meg Wolitzer

Puffin Books

978-0-525-55324-3 | Trade Paperback
304 pages | \$8.99 | Lexile: 770L



LESSON FOCUS

Author craft: examine how authors convey thoughts, feelings, and actions.

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

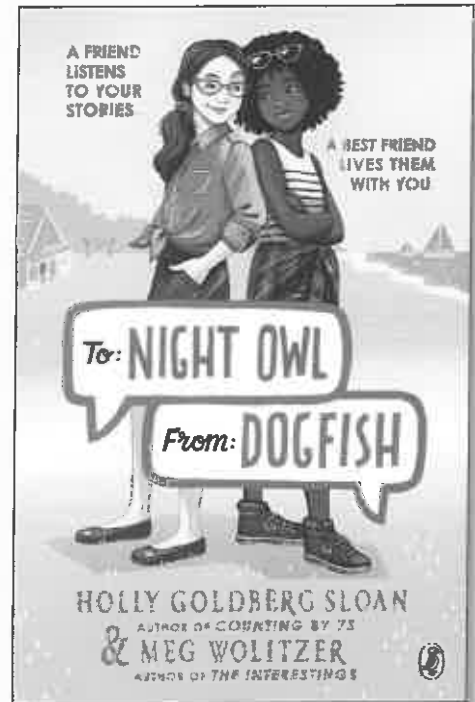
This unique book is told in multiple forms of communication (emails, letters, reflections) between multiple voices, written by two different authors, making it the perfect opportunity for students to practice their skills in identifying authors' techniques used to convey the characters' thoughts, feelings and actions.

LEARNING TARGETS

1. Students will identify distinct characteristics of the author's writing craft.
2. Students will capture the author's craft technique examples from different characters in the "Camp Incident" excerpt.
3. Students will connect craft to characters' thoughts, feelings, and actions.
4. Specific craft techniques studied:
 - a. **Whispering Parenthesis: sharing a secret with the reader**
 - b. **Emotional Emphasis in Italics and Capitalization: insight into character development**
 - c. **Dramatic Break in Sentence Structure: highlights specific details the author wants the reader to focus on.**

MATERIALS NEEDED

1. *To Night Owl From Dogfish* by Holly Goldberg Sloan & Meg Wolitzer, pages 93-107
2. Writer's Workshop - Author's Craft Techniques: examples from the excerpt (I Do), opportunity to practice (We Do)
3. Writer's Workshop - Author's Craft Techniques: independent practice (You Do)



SUMMARY

From two extraordinary authors comes a moving, exuberant, laugh-out-loud novel about friendship and family, told entirely in emails and letters.

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

- Step 1: Introduce students to the book *To Night Owl from Dogfish*.
 - Give an overall summary of the book. If you have not read it, please familiarize yourself with the summary provided.
- Step 2: Read aloud the excerpt “The Camp Incident” on pages 93-107. Present the entire excerpt first and then go back to close read for Author’s Craft techniques.
- Step 3: Writing Workshop: Author’s Craft Techniques Worksheet

Author’s Craft: how an author communicates to the reader

- Whispering parenthesis:** An author can share a secret with the reader about how the character is really feeling by putting it in parenthesis outside the actual dialogue.
- Break in sentence structure:** An author will break traditional sentence structure for emphasis.
- Italics and capitalization emphasis:** An author will change the type of font, style, and size to grab the reader’s attention and focus.

Examples from *To Night Owl From Dogfish* “Camp Incident”

pg	Craft Type	Quote	Shows...
94	Whispering	“(with both our passports and my phone inside)”	It wasn’t just any travel bag. It was the bag with all the important documents inside.
94	Italic Emphasis	“Which we’ve been told won’t be <i>that</i> big of a deal”	Doubts it is going to be easy to get everything replaced.
94	Sentence Structure	“...calls — not all the time — but we have trouble making them.”	Doesn’t want to seem completely disconnected from his daughter.
94	Whispering	“(I can see that he’s on the verge of freaking out about everything)...”	Emphasis on who is maintaining a cool head and who is on the verge.

pg	Craft Type	Quote	Shows...
96		“She blurts out, “Avery has no idea you’re coming today, Kristina! I told her I had a <i>surprise</i> for her, but <i>that’s</i> all I said.”	
96		“Bett removes the blindfold and yells (the girl has lungs), SURPRISE! ”	
96		“‘Why?’ she asks. ‘ <i>Why would you do this?</i> ’”	
97		“Then Bett says the kicker: ‘Come on — aren’t you glad to see her? I mean, she’s your MOM! ’”	