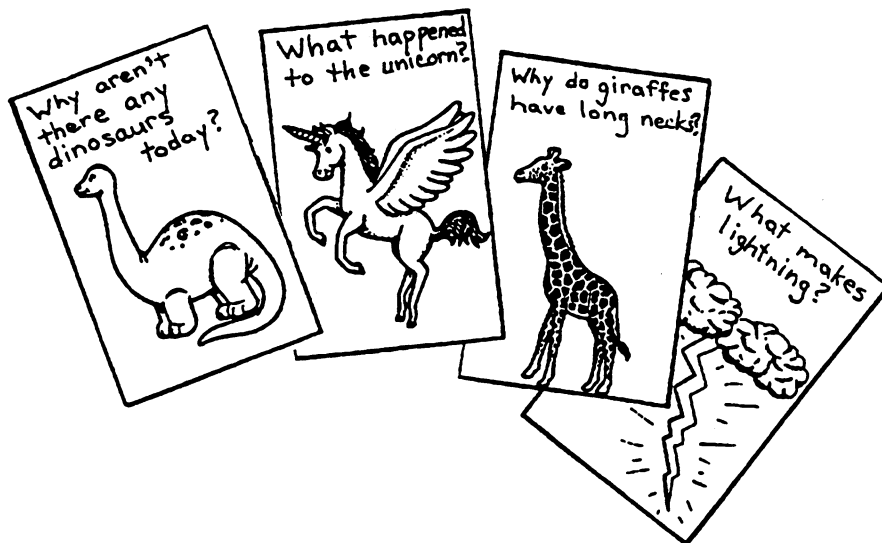


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# INTRODUCTION

*Writing and Cooperative Learning* is part of a cooperative learning series for students in years 2-5. This book provides directions and patterns for a variety of group projects which engage students in the writing process.

Writing and cooperative learning are natural partners! Brainstorming for ideas, shared editing and proofreading, cooperative "publishing," and other group activities are all part of the skill-building activities in this book. Students involved in these projects will have a positive experience with writing that puts an emphasis on group, rather than individual products.

Each writing project (mysteries, factual, descriptive, tall tales, research, and more) is prefaced by a list of needed materials and a pre-writing activity. The pre-writing activity is designed to stimulate thinking and provide a reservoir of ideas that can be used when writing begins. Brainstorming, literature models, and art prompts are some of the techniques used to get the creative process started.

*Writing and Cooperative Learning* also includes many patterns, instructions, and helpful illustrations for producing final written products in interesting forms. Fold-out books, books with moveable parts, patterns for book covers, shapes for writing on, unusual ways to display and share written work are among the many ideas for "publishing" student's writing.

Teachers will find in *Writing and Cooperative Learning* a wonderful collection of ideas that will encourage writing in a group setting. The projects produced make delightful displays so that writing can be shared, appreciated, and celebrated.

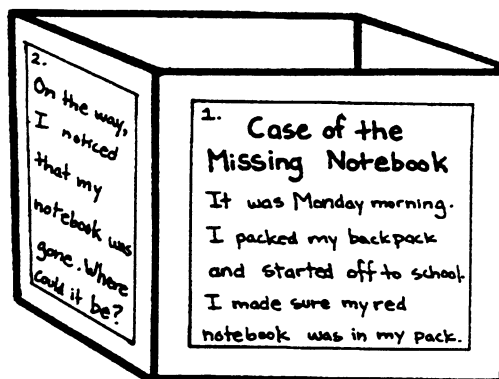
## NOTE TO THE TEACHER

Editing each other's work is one of the repeated activities in *Writing and Cooperative Learning*. Students need to understand the purpose of editing so they can help each other in a constructive manner. They should know that all good writers have their work edited because it is often difficult to catch one's own errors. Therefore, the teacher should conduct lessons that will show children how to give constructive criticism without destroying ideas. The author should understand how to accept the editor's suggestions without feeling offended. A spirit of supportive cooperation should prevail.

# MYSTERY BOX

## Materials:

- A square box for each group
- 4 index cards (or paper cut to fit sides of boxes) for each group
- Glue



## Pre-writing Activity:

Ask students if they have read or seen a mystery, or played a mystery game. You might like to read from an *Encyclopedia Brown* book by Donald J. Sobol. During the discussion elicit the idea that clues lead to the solution of a mystery.

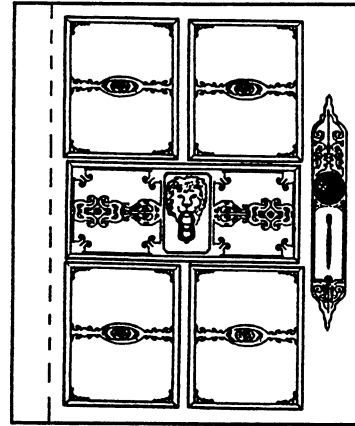
## Writing Project:

1. Divide the class into small groups. Tell each group to choose a mystery story starter such as the following:
  - The Case of the Missing Notebook
  - The Case of the Disappearing Lunches
  - The Mixed Up Homework
  - The Bent Key
  - The Lost Diamond Ring
2. Each group should number their cards from 1 to 4. Students should work together to write a short mystery story making sure it includes clues but leaves out the solution. Editing tasks may be divided among group members. One person could check for grammatical errors; another, spelling; the third, fluency; and the last person could make sure the story includes appropriate clues. The story should be divided into four sections and written, in order, on the cards. Then the cards should be glued onto the sides of the box.
3. Groups exchange boxes. Members can take turns reading the mystery. Then each group member should write a possible solution and place it in the box.
4. Return the box to its original group so they can read the solutions.

# WHAT'S BEHIND THE DOOR?

## *Materials:*

- Copy of door pattern (page 6) for each group
- Writing paper
- Crayons



## **Pre-writing Activity:**

Children are always curious about the unknown and look forward to a surprise. Draw large door on the board. In its centre put a question mark. Ask students what they think is behind the door. List their suggestions.

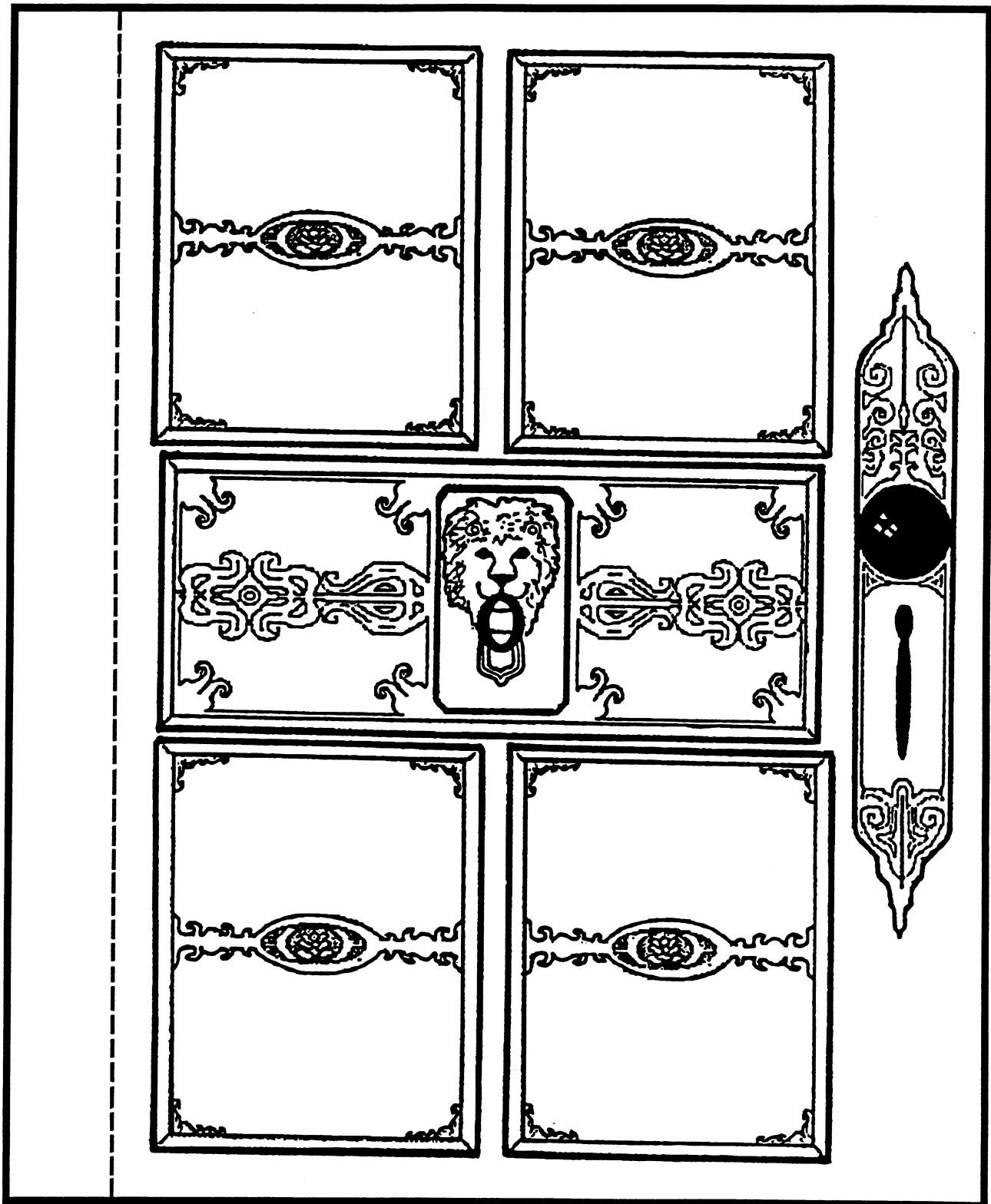
## **Writing Project:**

Divide the students into small groups. Give each group one door pattern (page 7) and each student writing paper. Have each group choose something to be behind their door. Then each group member should title their paper, "What's Behind Door?" They should write a riddle, paragraph, or rhyme giving hints. As a group 1 should select one person to illustrate what's behind the door after discussing what the drawing should include. Someone should color and cut out the door pattern. And, before displaying their work, students should work together to edit and proofread each other's writing. The left edge of the door pattern should be folded back at dashed line and glued so that it covers the illustration and can be opened to reveal what's behind the door.

Mount the papers in a long row. Following the last piece of writing, mount the c with its hidden picture. Students may want to add captions under each writing paper directing readers to "Read the next selection"; "You're getting warm"; etc.



# DOOR PATTERN



Fold back on dotted line. Paste the folded edge to paper so that the door can open and close.