Name:

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Modern Dilemmas

Date:

“How to Tell a Short Story”🡪 Tim O’Brien

**Background:** Too often when reading great literature, we as scholarly individuals focus too much on the literary significance. That is to say, we get wrapped up in *what* information is relayed, which is understandable because analyzing complex material as a skillset is necessary in today’s world. However, it’s also valuable to *create* stories, and to analyze *how* authors develop effective stories. This process takes days, weeks, and even months or years. It’s incredibly difficult to craft language and words in order to effectively “move” a reader; the most skilled artists, such as Tim O’Brien, can even simplify complex ideas in language that “laymen” can understand.

We as readers should be familiar with effective storytelling practices, because storytelling is as valuable a skill as analysis. The ability to entertain and captivate an audience is a skill rarely honed, but it’s the object of today’s class.

**Instructions:** Following the questions below, our class objective is to create an effective short story in structure, if not through artistic language.

1. Cause and effect: Write down three general cause-and effect reactions (example on board). These reactions will be included in your story
2. Now, pass your paper to a member of your group. That person is in charge of mapping out your story’s plot **from start to finish**. (15 minutes)
3. Now, pass the story plotline to a third member of your group. **Start writing the story** (10 minutes)
4. Now, pass the story plotline to a fourth member of your group. **Continue writing the story** (10 minutes).
5. Finally, pass the story to one more person in your group. This person should finish the story and ensure that all 3 details are present.