

This complimentary **word choice** lesson comes from the Northern Nevada Writing Project's "Going Deep with 6 Traits Language" Guide. Information on ordering a copy of this 194-page resource can be found by visiting <http://nnwp.org> and checking out the "NNWP Publications for Purchase" page.

Here's a word choice lesson that focuses on alliteration:

## By far, the Best Alphabet Book Ever\*\*

From Corbett Harrison, Northern Nevada Writing Project Consultant

Chris Van Allsburg's The Z Was Zapped is probably the best alphabet book ever.\*\* The book is cleverly subtitled "A Play in Twenty-Six Acts," which is a delightful premise. Picture this. The letter A stands on a stage; in the picture, several large rocks are about to fall on it. Your job as reader: figure out what stage direction has been written on the back side of the illustration. Flip the page over, and it reads "The A was in an avalanche." As reader, you soon discover that each page's picture riddle is based on alliteration. The A isn't in a rock slide or a cave-in; the A is in an avalanche.



\*\*This is an an admittedly subjective statement!

Share the first two or three picture riddles in this book. Read it slowly, and emphasize the alliteration in the answer. Once your students have the idea, refuse to share the pictures' answers until they have brainstormed half a dozen possibilities. You'll be amazed how many answers your students will generate from the picture. Celebrate the excellent synonyms they know. Give bonus smiles for multiple alliterations in student answers.

Writing assignment option A: "Write your riddle first!"

Stop halfway through the book. Put students in groups of three or four. As a group, they must create the last 13 sentence "riddles" for the book. Offer extra smiles or points if they choose powerful and alliterative verbs. Have groups exchange their 13 sentences, and have students in other groups illustrate their favorites and share the pictures with the original authors.

Writing assignment option B: "Draw your riddle first!"

Stop halfway through the book. Have students pick one of the latter letters from the alphabet and prepare to draw it on the blank stage (see worksheet on next page). The student will then draw (or paste pictures of) props and other additions to illustrate an alliterative riddle that he/she keeps safely in his/her head. Students pass their picture riddles around the class to each other. On Post-It notes, they write guesses for the sentence they think the picture conveys. New guesses go on new Post-Its. Celebrate the pictures that inspired the most Post-It guesses.

Writing assignment option C: "Create your own book!"

Students love this alphabet book. They react well when asked, "Do you think you could create an original alphabet book that does the same thing? Or something really similar? Instead of letters, what might be standing on the stage? Instead of a stage, where might the letters be?" Individual students or student groups can create their own alphabet books with this simple prompt and this wonderful model.

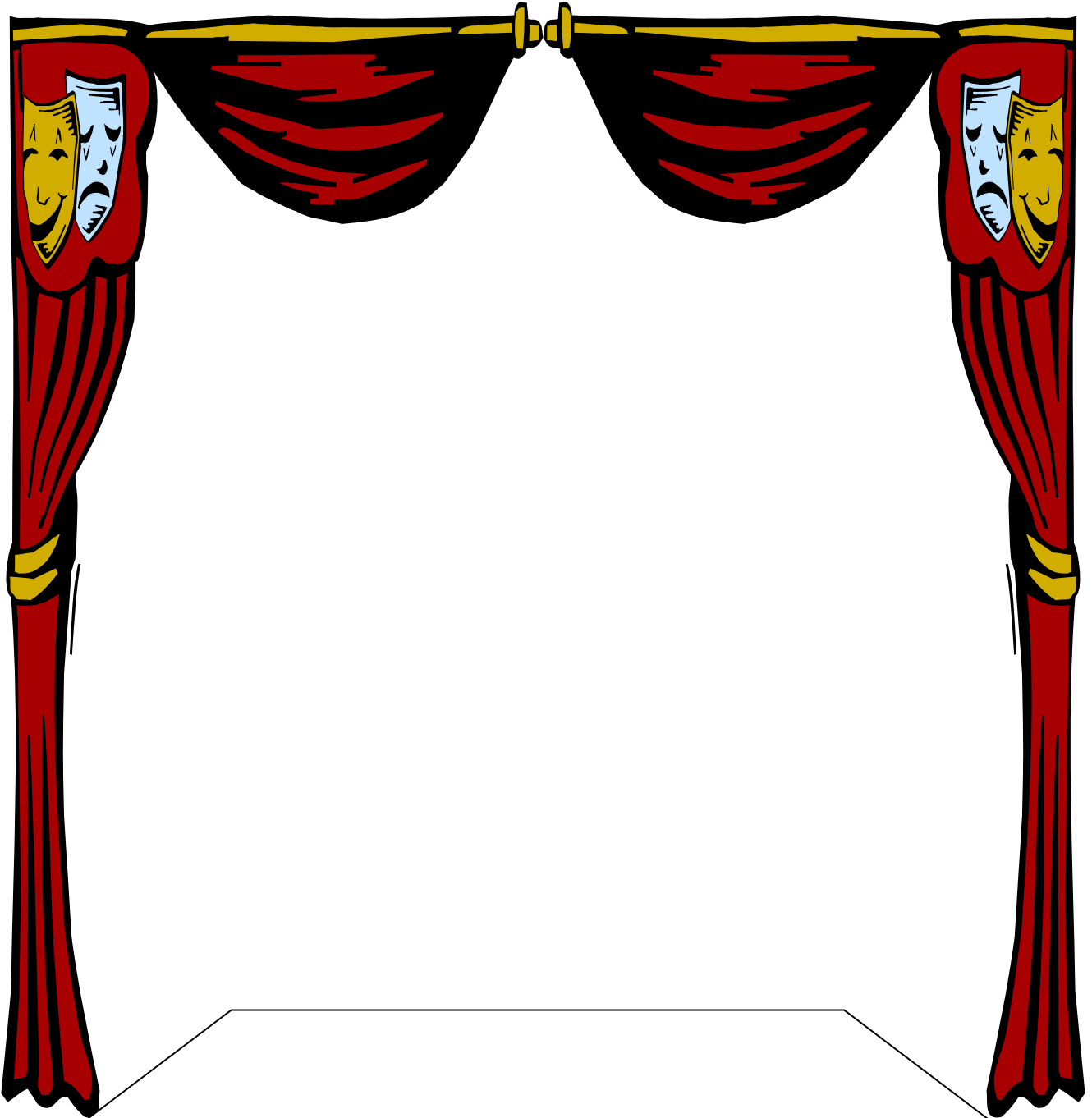
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## Inspired by The Z was Zapped: Illustrating your own Alliteration Riddles



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### Five Essays to Inspire Dialogue Among Teachers:

These five essays come with embedded Trait Post-Its so that teachers can not only discuss each essay's message but also think about specific writing traits in new and unique ways.

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### The Trait Modules:

These six modules contain lesson plans and resources from a variety of first- through twelfth-grade classrooms. These modules are not about giving away the lessons and resources to just the teachers who teach the exact same grade. The lessons and resources should not be quickly dismissed if it's discovered that the providing teacher teaches a different age or socio-economic level of student.

These lessons and resources come from teachers who have gone out of their way to help students own trait language in their classrooms. Helping a student own an academic language is a universal concept, not a grade specific one.

The goal of these six modules is to promote "adaptive talk." If, while exploring these modules, a teacher says, "I like the idea here, but I'd make it look different for my students, and here's how," then that teacher has succeeded in using this guide in the way it was intended.

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