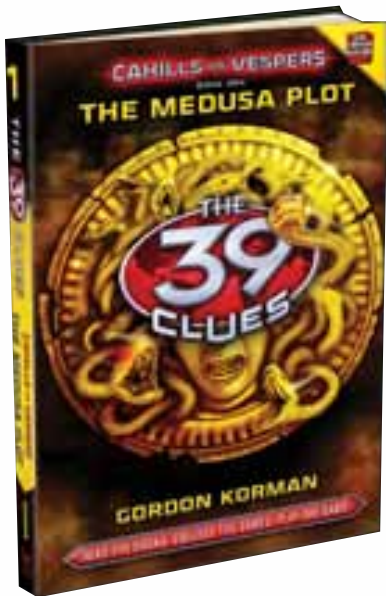


THE TRAITS OF WRITING WRAP UP

Introduce

Share with students that it's important to improve their use of each individual trait—the best writers work to bring **all of the traits** together in their writing. They know that captivating ideas, excellent organization, sparkling voice, dazzling word choice, flawless sentence fluency, and careful conventions and presentation are all parts of a solid and memorable piece. In a prologue, such as in Gordon Korman's *The 39 Clues Cahills vs. Vespers, Book I: The Medusa Plot*, the author's use of all of the traits is particularly important: he or she must set the stage for the rest of the book. A prologue builds the reader's expectations for a story, providing them with just a hint of the big idea and a taste of the author's style—often leaving them on the edge of their seat with high hopes for a satisfying ride to come.



Write!

- Using their knowledge of Korman's prologue, have students work as groups to write a suspenseful kidnapping of Amy and Dan Cahill.
- Have group members draft together. Using the **Introducing the Traits** chart as a reference, they might revise together for all traits, or assign "focus traits" to individuals or pairs.
- When they are finished, provide each student with a copy of the All Traits Quick Check, found at www.scholastic.com/decodingwriting. Have groups workshop their new prologues as a class, using the Quick Check as a reference for making comments on the strength or need for improvement of each trait area.

Read and Discuss

- Divide students into six groups and provide them with a copy of the following resources, found at www.scholastic.com/decodingwriting:

Introducing the Traits chart, p. 2 of *Decoding Writing with The 39 Clues* Educator Guide

Prologue of *The 39 Clues Cahills vs. Vespers, Book I: The Medusa Plot*, by Gordon Korman

- Assign each group a different "focus trait" (conventions/presentation as one unit) and one of the six sections of the prologue. Have students read their section and use the **Introducing the Traits** chart to analyze for each trait very briefly and jot small notes.
- Next, have them make more detailed notes on Korman's handling of their "focus trait."

Teacher Model

IDEAS

Cahill kidnappings (main idea); hot tub, water moccasin (supporting details)

ORGANIZATION

Remind students that though a prologue is itself a catching lead, it also has its own inviting opening, mesmerizing middle, and excellent ending

VOICE

Note Korman's suspenseful tone and ability to get inside a character's mind

WORD CHOICE

Underline the word *broke* (section I, line 2); note that it conveys suddenness and a hint of breathtaking surprise

SENTENCE FLUENCY

Mark the variety of sentence lengths, types, and beginnings

- Bring the class back together to present, discuss, and compare each group's findings.

Practicing the **traits** together, students build the skills they need to become more careful readers and confident writers.

www.scholastic.com/decodingwriting

